St. Joseph's Colony 1905 - 1930



A translation by Lambert and Tillie Schneider

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Pictures and Pages

on the

SILVER JUBILEE

of

St. Joseph's Colony

Compiled by the

Oblate Priests in the colony

Over 80 illustrations and 2 maps

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

The original book St. Joseph's Kolonie, 1905-1930 was written by Father W. Schulte, O.M.I., who refers to himself occasionally during the text as the Chronist (chronicler). In his modesty, he omitted his name on the title page.

In translating the work every effort was made to preserve the mood and essence of the German expressions. However, as in any translation, the subjective qualities are often modified and sometimes even lost.

It is hoped that this English version of the book, which was published in 1930 in the German script, will awaken memories in many of us and provide the younger generations with a general picture of the hardships endured by the pioneer missionaries and settlers in St. Joseph's Colony in Western Canada.

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To the illustrious friend and patron of the Oblates, to the Father of the German Catholic Colonists,

His Excellency

JOSEPH H. PRUD'HOMME

Bishop of Prince Albert and Saskatoon,

in gratitude, this story of honour is dedicated



Bishop Joseph H. Prud'homme, D.D.

Bishop's House Prince Albert, Saskatchewan March 29, 1930

Rev. P. Thos. Schnerch, O.M.I. 2059 Scarth Street REGINA, Saskatchewan Dear Rev. Father Provincial:

In your letter of March 20th, you inform me that the Oblate Fathers, on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of St. Joseph's Colony, will be publishing a commemorative work in which the history of the founding and the development of the colony will be recounted. It is a great satisfaction for me to know that we do not allow the historical past to be forgotten. Certainly the hardships and the courage of the Oblates, the spirit of sacrifice and the perseverance of the colonists, are worthy of recording in a written work. After all, the past is only a promise of the future. So many sacrifices have been made for the Catholic religion in the colony, and there will be many more in the future to further organize and develop the colony.

There are already 1,300 Catholic families in the colony; that is a force that will be to the good of souls, the protection of the Church, to the honour of God.

God's blessing, which visibly has come upon the colony will hopefully continue.

May my blessing, which I heartily bestow on the book and the colony, be strengthened and fortified by God's blessing.

Dedicated in Christ, † Joseph H. Prud'homme Bishop of Prince Albert and Saskatoon

INTRODUCTION

On May 25, 1930, it was 25 years since the day that Holy Mass was first celebrated by an Oblate priest in the community of the newly-founded St. Joseph's Colony. A look back on this event awakens a great many memories.

The district in which this holy event took place was not unfamiliar to the Oblates. All of northwest Canada, for several decades had been blessed by their presence, their sweat and labour in the service of God. Therefore, it is not only possible but very likely, that the Oblate missionaries, in their journeys from mission to mission or in the company of converted Indians on their travels within the borders of the present St. Joseph's Colony, were the first to offer Holy Mass.

There is no definite knowledge about this and the proof of sources is of no consequence, since at that time the land had not yet been surveyed by the government and the present customary designations such as township, section, etc., were absent. The changeableness of the Indian wanderers on the open prairie seldom followed definite guides, but instead depended on fishing lakes or rivers, or depended on the possibility of hunting, weather or mood. The priest who celebrated that memorable first Mass in the colony was a member of that society from whose ranks, the first missionaries and pioneers led the way of the Christian Catholic religion in northwestern Canada. In this pagan land that stretches from sea to sea and to the grim snowy wasteland of the north, the Oblate missionaries, the first apostles, spread the seed of our holy religion. The words which the apostle Paul spoke to his first Christian converts, "Ego vos genui — ego plantavi" can be applied to the Oblate society. The Oblate Order is the spiritual mother of the Catholic West. The Oblates established the parishes and then left their care to others while they went further into unknown mission territory. Usually it is not the original few faithful who will reap the harvest of their share of the labour in

the vineyard of the Lord, which they planted with so much sacrifice and pain. After a period of time, the vineyard would be left to another's care. "Appolo rivagit." The new clergy received a share in the bountiful spiritual harvest of western Canada.

The Church is an obliging mother, however; in her concern for the livelihood and existence of the missionaries, she assigned to them the organization and administration of several parishes or districts. The largest of these is St. Joseph's Colony, whose founding and progress to the present day will be described in the pages following. We pray that the patroness of the Oblates, the Blessed Virgin, Queen of the Prairie, and St. Joseph, protector of the colony will guide this pen so that the readers may behold the wise hand of God as the forerunners boldly endured frustrations and stress in an amazing way to found and establish what today is St. Joseph's Colony, the home of a zealous Catholic life.



A. Dontenwill, O.M.I Archbishop of Ptolemais Present Superior General



C. J. Eugene de Mazenod Bishop of Marseilles Our Holy Founder

BACKGROUND

When the first stettlers arrived in the district of St. Joseph's Colony, they were greeted by a wild, uncultivated plain. They weren't the first arrivals. The discoverer of western Canada was La Verendrye who arrived in the company of a Catholic missionary, his three sons, and fifty men in the year 1731. For one hundred years before the arrival of the German settlers, there were hunters, trappers and officials of the huge Hudson's Bay Company who ruled all the trade in the western territory, and traversed the treeless plains of the colony.

Heavily laden with company wares or with the skins of fur-bearing animals from hunting, they followed rutted trails from one trading post to another which were usually situated on the shores of rivers or lakes. When a palisade surrounded the post, it was called a fort. The area of St. Joseph's Colony lay directly on the main thoroughfare of this trade and commerce. Some eighty miles north of the colony, on the Saskatchewan River, stood Fort Pitt. Further

east on the same river and only sixty miles from the colony, at Battleford, the seat of government for the Northwest Territories was organized. From both of these centers, trade and some commerce spread in all directions.

Long before the arrival of the white man, however, human feet had walked on the prairies; there were remains of war and peace, of battles, of slaughters, and of peaceful family life. But the broad prairies are mute and quiet. They cannot tell us anything of the life and occupations of those early peoples who peacefully wandered the flat plains. Only when the plow turned up a relic of the past, or if the eye of the settler caught sight of utensils and weapons in the ground, were there some scant reminders of a long culture. In nearly all parts of the colony similar finds were made. They were of various kinds. There were arrows, clubs, tomahawks made of stone, rough and misshapen, as well as weapons finely polished, sharply honed, or artistically decorated. Also, pots and grinders made of stone, bone needles to sew warm clothing of fur pelts, as well as iron butcher and hunting knives, which belong to a later period, were found. Large and small stove plates chiseled and decorated with puzzling signs and pictures, stone blocks about the circumference of a human head with deep eyesockets, stove pipes short and long stemmed, ornamental chairs of wolve's teeth or bears' claws, etc., are "discoveries" which came from the prairies and preserved in private collections or in museums.

Athough these finds are significant and worth mentioning, the lifestyle of that wild race of people will always be unknown. The discoveries will unlock very little of the knowledge of the history, mode of life, customs and habits of past mankind.

The present civilization on the prairies may wish to know more about the life and work of those early inhabitants, may wish to know who were those masters of the plains, which now through civilized diligence and perseverance have been transformed into fertile fields.

The best authority, who can give us information about that race of people, is the Catholic missionary who lived with them all year. What did the Oblate missionary accomplish with the Indian, the earliest inhabitant of St. Joseph's Colony, and a continual wanderer?

We have to distinguish between the Indian before conversion and after conversion.

Before Conversion

Which tribe of Indians considered St. Joseph's Colony as part of their hunting grounds? It was the largest tribe, the Cree Indians, which at their highest development were estimated to comprise 60,000 people who roamed central Saskatchewan, Alberta and part of Manitoba. The religion of the Cree Indians was based on two notions: Kitchie Manitou, the great good spirit, and Matchi Manitou, the evil spirit. According to Indian superstition, the evil spirit created all sorts of mischief and caused all harm, with the good spirit Kitchie Manitou unable to prevent it; so naturally more offerings were made to the evil spirit than to the good spirit — to appease him. Usually a dog was slaughtered and when it was defective, some other offering was made to Matchi Manitou.

Due to Carl May's "Travelogue", or Cooper's "Leather Mocassins" and other Indian stories, we have a completely false impression of the peculiarities of the red man. In their stories, the Indian is described as a brave, noble and true hero. Historic reality, however, clears away at least some of these illusions about the Indian of the Canadian West. The red man was a heathen of the worst kind. He was a cowardly, cruel, dirty and lazy person. He would not face an opponent of equal rank in open battle. A small group of resolute and courageous men could ward off a large onslaught of Indians. P. Lafleche tells of an example of this. A missionary accompanied by a caravan of Catholic Métis of about 80 men, women and children were on a hunting expedition. Unexpectedly, they came upon a large Indian camp of at least 600 tents (perhaps 1,800 persons). The Métis intrenched themselves by arranging their wagons in a circle. Trusting their superior strength, the Indians attacked but the wagons were excellent protection and the first attack by the enemy was bloodily resisted. The small group could easily have been defeated if the attackers on the fort of wagons had had even a few average brave men. But since the Indians could not overcome the Métis in the first attack, they simply withdrew.

The preferred methods of warfare by the redskins were surprise attacks at night or to lie in wait in ambush. Another missionary reports of such a surprise attack during his first visit to Fort Pitt. During the night, a band of Blackfoot Indians sneaked into the Cree camp, fell upon them suddenly, and in the subsequent conflict a Cree Indian and his horse were killed. Next morning Crees discovered a seriously wounded Blackfoot Indian. He was killed immediately, scalped and the limbs were cut from the body;



the limbs were fastened to the poles and the whole tribe danced crazily around the trophy. Then a part of the tribe, about 60 Cree, rode south into the territory to seek revenge, cunningly stole 100 horses but were discovered and in the final settlement of the quarrel, two Indians — a Cree and a Blackfoot had to die.

Because of their wandering and thieving ways, a family life in the true sense could not develop. The woman was the absolute slave of the man. Before marriage a daughter's hand was not asked for of her father, rather she was traded as some wares, or was sold to the highest bidder. Polygamy and divorce were in vogue. When a father had several daughters and could not sell them to different men, it wasn't unusual for him to offer them to one man who without shame or fear married the sisters. It happened often that the Indian was dissatisfied with his wife. Then she was inhumanly beaten. In his vulgar brutal anger and revengefulness, he was capable of either selling his wife or giving her away. They also exchanged wives among themselves without her consideration or consent. What an abyss of wickedness is opened before our eyes! Moreover, one has to consider that the women not only looked after the housework but also had to drag home the game of the hunt and to dress and prepare it. All necessary clothing was made from animal hides after tanning and

sewing it together. The tent — wigwam — was put up and taken down by her. Her husband never as much as lifted a finger to help her with the work, considering it an insult. Unless he was on the hunt or thievery, he, with his companions, led a completely idle life. When they were on the move, the man rode the horse while the poor woman walked along side loaded with a heavy packsack so that she nearly buckled under the burden. He was completely unconcerned about his wife whether in rain or mud, in snow or ice.

What this lazy, indolent people accomplished, defied description. A troop of men unexpectedly came across a camp of different savages who had taken an old woman, a man and a girl who were on a hunt. Both old people were seized and slowly tortured to death by the band of Indians. The old woman was martyred. The savages poked her eyes out and stabbed her with knives so that death would not follow immediately. Finally, she succumbed to her horrible suffering. The eighteen-year-old girl attempted to flee from the beasts. But in vain. In her distress she threw herself at the feet of the white man and begged his protection. The white man urgently requested the Indians to spare her. But they laughed fiendishly, speared her to the ground and murdered her. Enough of this drama! It was a cruel heathen world, heartless and pitiful, worse than wild animals which at least have consideration and care for their own kind.

From this brief presentation of the heathen Indian life, one can gain a mental picture of early inhabitants of the prairie as they travelled in war, stealing, hunting or setting up their tents in the area of St. Joseph's Colony. That was a completely different world than today! It was a vicious, filthy heathen world under the influence of the evil spirit. We, however, who live in blessed Christian peace, who are endowed with numerous Catholic homes, with towns steeped in the peace of Christian family life, should remember that in the same localities where our homes and fields are now, in the distant past, a sad drama played itself out — a pagan Indian way with its infernal practices of cruelty and vice. Perhaps the stone in front of your house or in your field, which you pass unnoticed, is a witness of terrible and inhuman deeds. Perhaps a depression in the land or a

small hill has heard the dying wails of a human child. If these prairies could only speak!

What became of the later Cree Indians? Thanks to God, they nearly all converted to the Catholic religion through the work and sacrifice of that religious order who were constant guardians of St. Joseph's Colony — the Oblate Fathers.

After the Conversion

It was a hard, thorny field to which the sons of Eugene de Mazenod had to adapt. What hardships these missionaries undertook to win those souls to God! The fruits of their work can be noted when a comparison is made of the Indians before and after conversion. The first mission station was located in northern Saskatchewan at Ile à la Crosse. The mission was founded in 1845 by Father Taché, O.M.I. who later became Archbishop of St. Boniface, (Winnipeg, Manitoba). The trip from Manitoba to Saskatchewan was by horseback or by wagon with squeaking wooden axles. Rapid flowing streams had to be crossed and wandering Indian bands had to be avoided. The prairie offered no shelter to the traveller, therefore, he camped in the open in storm, rain and all kinds of inclement weather. The real sorrow and suffering began when the missionaries arrived at the primitive settlements of the Indians. Completely cut off from the trade and way of life of the white man, the missionaries proceeded to change the life style of the Indian. One missionary reported his first impressions. The Indians squatted on the ground around a large pot. The pot contained all sorts of things — clean and unclean, and itself was never washed. A casual glance at it caused nausea. There were fish, raw and uncleaned, just as they came out of the water, thrown into the kettle. The fish were then served either on a stick or placed on the ground at the feet of the guests. To cook, fry or smoke the fish was either unknown to the Indians or too cumbersome a procedure. The repugnance of such a meal tortured the hunger urge but had to be overcome so as not to insult the natives by taking a small piece of raw fish and forcing it down. Finally, the stomach became accustomed to this seemingly impossible fare because nothing else



was available. In the course of the years, the mission-aries adjusted their eating and sleeping habits to the smoky wigwams or the open sky as the new environment required. For the sake of Christ the mission-ary wanted all good to come to everyone.

In order to bring the glad tidings of the Gospel

to distant Indian tribes, extra self-denial was needed on the day-long walks. Father Faraud, O.M.I. tells of a time when he was on such a trip for three days and nights without sufficient food. To satisfy the gnawing hunger, he searched for wild berries and the eggs of wild birds. It is no wonder that the life of a missionary was a life of sacrifice. Over and above this hard life, the climate afforded still greater hardships. Bishop V. Grandin, O.M.I. complained in a letter that of the first eight Oblate missionaries in his area, only two died a natural death; the rest either froze to death, were drowned or were killed by Indians.

But the heroism of these Oblate missionaries was amply compensated for by the astonishing zeal of the new converts, a zeal which recalls the sincere faith of the early Christians. The desire for holy baptism was so great in the Indians that there was rivalry among them of who could first learn the necessary prayers and grasp the basic truths of Christianity. They spent days and a good part of the nights to study the religion. Those who had learned some of the prayers taught the rest, so that it wasn't unusual that children of three years old knew their prayers by heart: the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and the Apostle's Creed. "We are in a hurry," they crowded upon the missionary, "to receive holy baptism since we may be surprised by death and thus not see God." The missionary advised them, however, that they first had to change some of their customs to ensure that their desire was sincere. At this time, an old Indian appeared one day with two wives. The missionary was to judge which of the two wives he was to leave

"This is your affair," the priest informed him, "of which wife is easiest to leave. Which of the two do you like more?"

"I like them both equally," answered the old man.

Whereupon, Father Faraud asked the older of the two women who had several grown sons and could easily support their mother, whether she would henceforth live with her sons. The old lady replied murmering something which sounded like no. The missionary decided then, saying to the Indian, "You will keep the younger woman with the small children and the other will live with her sons."

But this solemn decision loosed a flood of abuse and invective from the older woman.

"That is the payment for my work," she raged at her husband. "I have always been completely honest with you. The other woman has never cleaned your moccasins and your clothes and kept them in as good repair as I have; now you disown me and choose the other one."

The introduction of Christianity to these children of nature required great sacrifices of them at times, because they found it difficult to comprehend. There were many incidents which would seem to us to be tragic-comedy. When one considers the deeply rooted customs and habits which they had to give up when they accepted the Christian faith, their renunciation of the old ways fills us with admiration in that they so willingly accepted the yoke of the cross.

Especially notable in this regard was the odd behavior of one Indian. He was determined to be baptized on the feast of St. Peter, because, as he said, "St. Peter has the key to heaven and I have such confidence in him that when I die he will permit my entry into heaven. That is why I want to be baptized on his feast day." He consequently began a very strict fast, forty days prior to the feast of St. Peter. Despite the warnings of the missionary, so strict was the fast that the poor man on the day of his baptism was unable to raise himself because of weakness, and had to be carried into the church.

The christianizing of the Indian tribes of the northwest is a glittering and glorious page in the annals of the mission labours of our Holy Church. Of course, the work blends in with all the other missionary work of the Church. In the flood of immigration, the lord of the prairies was relegated to the reservation where disease and an unnatural way of life became the norm.

We have begun the history of St. Joseph's Colony with the story of the dark sons of the prairie for two reasons. First, to give the reader some idea of the life of the original inhabitants of the colony, the heathen Indians, and secondly, to show the work of grace in the Indian who experienced a complete conversion. It should be noted too, that the red children of the prairie were peace-loving, well mannered Christians who travelled across the area of St. Joseph's Colony, accompanied by the Oblate missionaries who stand by their side as friend, helper and father.

But the dawning of a new era could not be halted in any way. Immigration was knocking violently at the door of the broad west. The dawn of a completely different order of things had come and with its glimmer gilded the prairies which had slumbered for thousands of years.

Description of the Country

St. Joseph's Colony is a part of the vast Canadian prairies which stretch out like a giant from the Great Lakes in the east to the foothills of the mountains. The elevation of this gigantic flatland is not uniform throughout its total extent. There are three more or less distant graduations from west to east. The eastern plains, the so-called Red River Valley in Manitoba is only 700 feet above sea-level. The second level stretches from approximately the city of Brandon, Manitoba to the city of Moose Jaw in Saskatchewan and north to mid-way between Prince Albert and Battleford with an elevation of up to 1,600 feet. Finally, the third part of the prairies in which St. Joseph's Colony is situated, rises from 2,000 to 4,000 feet and extends from the second level to the foot of the Rockies.

The general character of the landscape of the prairies is the same throughout. Small clumps of trees and bushes or lakes seldom break the monotony of the green flatlands.

The appearance of the open prairies is like an ocean; there are no visible boundaries except the distant horizon. If a cannon were fired at a horizontal height of 4 or 5 feet, the bullet could travel for hundreds of miles without striking a tree or bush.

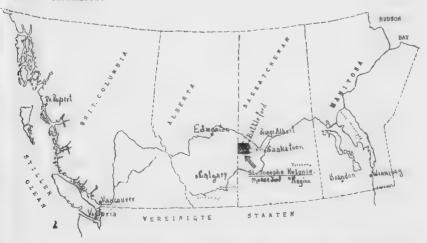
St. Joseph's Colony is located in the province of Saskatchewan. The borders of the colony are: on the south, 8 miles south of 52° latitude; on the east, a broken line with the farthest point being 32 miles east of 109° longitude; on the north, 34 miles north of 52° latitude; on the west, 110° longitude, on the border of the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta. The area covers 42 miles from north to south and 72 miles from west to the farthest eastern edge. The district forms a regular rectangle which is broken only on the east side, and comprises 77 townships with an area of 2,772 square miles. This is the size of an important principality in Europe. The farmers who live in this colony, however, consider it more important than a principality because in most cases it is the first piece of land that they can call their own.

Prior to settlement and the flood of immigrants, the Canadian government sent personnel into the territory to investigate and survey the area. The results of their work and research is compiled in a survey report. The documents list minute details of actual circumstances and give a true picture of the possibilities of settlement with reference to the quality of soil, the climate, etc. The documents were a source of information for the immigration societies and land companies who held hundreds of thousands of acres of land for sale, and also for the cautious individual immigrant who trekked into the wilderness. The importance of the survey reports was demonstrated many times.

The first of the reports, which comprised only two townships of the colony originated in the year 1878 and is signed by J.S. Dennis, Jr. who later became Minister of Public Works in the Northwest Territories, and now is Chief Commissioner of Colonization of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The government official concisely and systematically described Township 37, Range 17, 18. Carmelheim Church and Landis station are situated in one, and Palo station in the other. All other reports on the colony are dated later from 1882 to 1904. In the complete report

there were to be found individual descriptions of each of the 77 townships. However, many of the descriptions were a continuous repetition for nearly 90% of the colony had the same topographical features.

The general composition of the soil of the colony is a top layer of humus with hard clay below. Occasionally, there is a layer of light sand and alkali near lakes and in certain lowlands. Elevations throughout the colony are approximately the same. Great differences are not evident. Farthest to the east is Whiteshore Lake at 2,056 feet above sea level, Macklin on the western edge at 2.167 feet. Wilkie in the north at 2,183, Kerrobert on the south at 2,223 feet. However, here and there one can see high hills. In Township 36, Range 28, not far from St. Donatus Church, there is a particularly high hill about 150 feet in height. Noteworthy too, are the higher areas northwest of Cactus Lake, and south of Denzil, the Hearts Hills which were also called John's Hills by the German farmers in the area. A highland surrounds Muddy Lake between Revenue and Rosary Church, and was called "Gebirg" (hills); the English name was Ear Hills. Two remarkable hills, visible far and wide, range south of the town of Tramping Lake. Another significant rise is found in the northwest part of the colony in Township 40, Range 18, the so-called Spy Hill, probably because from this hill the Indians watched and spied upon their enemies.



St. Joseph's Colonoy, its location in Western Canada

St. Joseph's Colony is not blessed with many meandering streams whose murmur would lighten the heart of the wanderer, or majestic rivers whose silvery glimmer would beautify its shores. There are, however, a few lakes, some large, some small which were like Judas among the apostles; it would have been better if they had not existed! Most of them are alkali and no fish can thrive in them.

Although the characteristics of the landscape of the colony cannot be praised with too many superlative phrases, it did hold a secret jewel more precious than a succession of valleys and forest idylls. Man cannot live just by looking at a beautiful landscape. St. Joseph's Colony is like a good piece of handiwork; it has first class soil - rich, fertile wheat lands. On this aspect, all reports of government officials agreed long before the settlers arrived. The glowing successes of later harvests are testimony to the accuracy of their report. At least 85% of the soil is first rate wheat land. It is a great satisfaction to see the colony develop so quickly in the short span of 25 years. In the beginning, a desert, an uncultivated wilderness stared at the visitor; today he is greeted by modern commerce and communication systems, criss-crossed by railways and dotted with towns. Even from a distance, the granaries announce the wealth of the new land. Throughout the countryside there are neat farm buildings and roomy barns, as well as spotlessly clean business streets on which hundreds of automobiles and trucks hurry back and forth. All this property belongs to the new settlers who arrived here poor as beggars. There is no doubt that God has showered His richest blessings on this land and its inhabitants.

By paging through government documents, one can sift out many an interesting account of the experiences of officials in their duties in St. Joseph's Colony. These men were very knowledgeable about the country. In 1903, a certain Fred. W. Wilkins described the area of Township 39, Range 22, north of Muddy Lake. There he found such hard ground that he had to use a pick in order to loosen just one lump. At this phenomenon, he observed that the remarkable soil may be suitable for brickmaking, pottery and cement. Another plan of the same surveyors was to dam the so-called Crooked Valley, a winding valley, which is

found in Township 39, Range 20 near Scott. The Canadian National Railway took up part of the plan by building a dam on a branch of the valley on Section 11, Township 39, Range 20. The work began in March 1929 and was completed in August of the same year. The cost of the undertaking came to about \$120,000. The stored water was necessary for the railway locomotives.

In the valleys of this township, Fred W. Wilkins also noted the presence of split rock, limestone and marble-like stone. Mr. Wilkins also considered the possibility of building a large dam some 20 miles south of Crooked Valley and west of Broadacres where, according to his opinion, the soil conditions were favourable. It would form a large artificial lake with a surface area of 15 square miles and about 60 feet deep. In general, though, the possibility of success of the project in the western prairies was very doubtful, because the average rainfall in the prairie provinces is too little to make the venture profitable.

A true story, but which must have been a joke, comes from a report made by a certain W. A. Ashe in 1882 on Township 36, Range 19 (somewhere between Handel and Leipzig), in which he made the following statement, "The water in all the streams and brooks in this township is excellent and always fresh." What lack of investigation! There is no stream or streamlet, no brook or brooklet, no water flows or murmurs or ripples or runs in this township. The land is dry as dust. Perhaps the reports about rivers and streams were prophetic? Did they draw the farmer into the area to satisfy his great thirst? But his thirst was not for water!

A report of F.W. Wilkins in the year 1883 describes the valleys in the southeast part of Township 35, Ranges 17, 18, 19. The valleys are approximately 100 feet deep and surrounded by hills on all sides encircling the bitter lakes. The remarkable thing about the valleys is the fact that they run in parallel directions. For example, one valley is located on Section 12, another on Section 1, Township 36, Range 19; a twin pair of valleys is located on Township 36, Range 18 on Sections 6 and 7.

J. W. Tyrell in 1903 writes of an island which is found in the middle of a lake which is about three miles south-

west of Landis. A thick forest of poplar trees covers the island, a contrast to the open prairies where no trees are to be found. The numerous prairie fires never reached the island and so it remained heavily wooded.

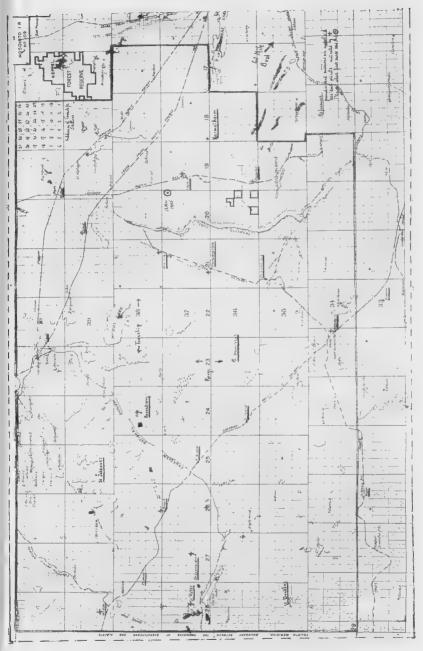
In St. Joseph's Colony there is an outstanding lake called Aroma Lake located in a northwesterly direction of the station Cavell, in Township 38, Range 18. The water is particularly recommended for treatment of gout and rheumatism.

In a more easterly direction lies White Shore Lake of which the officials had little good to say. The lake contains a mixture of chemical substances: sodium sulphate, magnesium sulphate, sodium chloride which give off such a penetrating odor that it fills the air for miles around. But have the settlers shunned the area around the lake? Not at all. Their lands and buildings are found right up to the shore of the lake.

A lake with a gruesome name and loathsome memories is Killsquaw Lake located on the west side of Tramping Lake halfway between Unity and Scott on Township 39, Range 22. There is no lake in all of Canada that awakens such repulsive memories. Near this lake, so a legend tells us, a group of Cree Indians set up their wigwams with their families. They were on a buffalo hunt. One day when all the men were away, a band of Blackfeet Indians pounced on the camp, and without pity the bloodthirsty redskins butchered the defenceless women and threw their bodies into the lake. From this shameful deed, the lake received the name Killsquaw Lake.

In the far west of the colony near St. Peter's Church in Township 37, Range 28, there is a lake called Cosine, a name that reminds one of a young lady. The Office of the Interior in Ottawa reports that the origin of the name is in a mathematical error made by the surveyors when they were working in the area. Cosine is the English word for a mathematical term used in logarithms.

ST. JOSEPH'S COLONY



TRAMPING LAKE DISTRICT

Forestry

In 1903, a survey party led by Mr. St. James was working in Township 38, Range 21 south of Muddy Lake, about six miles west of Revenue. Since there was not one tree in the whole neighbourhood, firewood had to be brought by raft from the east side of Tramping Lake. Except for a small area of trees on the east side of Tramping Lake and on the south side of Sunny Lake, there are no trees in St. Joseph's Colony. However, the treeless region suited the settlers well. That is what they wanted, an easily tilled soil. The Tramping Lake area could not fill the settler's needs for lumber and they consequently had to transport wood from great distances. The farmers who settled on the east side could partially fill their requirements from the so-called 60-mile bush in Township 35, Range 16, some 12 miles southwest of Biggar. A Catholic Métis Indian by the name of Des Charley lived there, and was well known to the pioneers. Some of their wood they got from a forest preserve about 12 miles from Traynor. The settlers on the west side of Tramping Lake got their supplies of lumber and wood either from Alberta at a place about 40 miles northwest of Macklin or from the area around Battleford.

Salt and Oil

In the vicinity of St. John's Church (Township 39, Range 25) there is an excellent salt lake (cooking salt). The parish priest of the district, Fr. John Schultz, O.M.I., was firmly convinced that the area had commercial value and that in due time an industry would begin. The priest writes, "There are prospects that St. John's Church will one day be surrounded by a town. Sooner or later, a railway will be built to Salt Lake so that the mineral deposits of salt and oil can be developed."

Metals and Coal

Coal has been found in the western part of the colony

as wells were being dug. Always, however, it was in layers, never in a solid vein which would be worthwhile. In many areas of the colony, ground water and deep well water often contained an excessive amount of iron. The high percentage may be due to a possible ore deposit but no expert opinion on this is available at present.

Petroleum

There have been several drillings for oil near the town of Unity. The oilfield probably lies 8 to 10 miles northwest of Unity. A company which explored the area originated in Calgary under the name of the Unity Valley Oil Company. The following is taken from the president's report to the shareholders on February 13, 1930.

"The first drilling in the valley went to a depth of 2,200 feet. The work ceased because of water interference. An attempt was made at another location but this also failed."

Why the second attempt failed is not stated. Presently, they are drilling at still another location and are at a depth of 1,800 feet.

Speculating in oil is a risky business. One hears of the few who have struck it rich, but of the millions who have lost their hard-earned money, one hears nothing. Are the oil wells on a farmer's property a blessing or a curse? Past experience shows us that sudden riches are a mixed blessing. In the Our Father, the good Lord teaches us to pray for our daily bread, not riches.

Climate

For the reader not of this country, and not familiar with the climate of the North American Continent, a general description may be of value. With the exception of the Atlantic and Pacific coastal regions, the climate of the continent is very harsh as compared to Germany, Austria and South Russia which are on the same parallels of latitude. The area between the oceans stretching from the mountains to the Gulf of Mexico is a storm infested area with sudden weather changes. Compared to western Europe, it is extremely cold in winter and very hot in summer. Newspapers daily report heavy snows from the

icy oceans in the north to Texas in the south. When we consider that St. Joseph's Colony is on the same latitude as Holland and northern Germany, and that Texas and the southern states are the same as south Italy or North Africa, then the vast difference in climate between Western Europe and North America becomes evident. The government reports tell how surveyors were often surprised by, and unprepared for, changeable weather. On May 22, 1903 virtually all areas reported heavy snowfall! Another report tells of frost in June and again in September. The weather plays tricks in Western Canada. There has been snow in mid-summer and thunder and warm weather in December or January. An article in a paper published in the western town of Medicine Hat states that Christmas Day was so warm that the donning of a Panama hat would have been in order. The news item was ridiculed in the East as groundless, not realizing that the West is filled with climatic contradictions.

Origin of Place Names Within the Colony

Baloil — a castle in Scotland.

Broadacres — a description of the wide open fields.

Brass — Assistant superintendent of the C.P.R. in Wilkie.

Denzil — a character in Scott's literary work, "Rokeby".

Evesham — a battle in English history.

Ermine — a fur bearing animal.

Hallam — a friend of Lord Tennyson.

Handel — a German composer of music.

Kerrobert - Robert Kerr, an official with the C.P.R.

Kelfield — Kelly Field, a farmer who lived in the district.

Landis — an authority on American baseball.

Leipzig — a German city.

Luseland — after the Luse Land Co. which was selling land in the area.

Macklin — the owner of the Winnipeg Free Press.

Major — the title of an officer.

Phippen — a judge.

Primate — a high church official.

Onward — forward.

Revenue — income.

Salvador — an island where Columbus landed in his discovery of America.

Scott — an English poet.

Traynor — a Scottish judge who visited the area in 1905.

Unity - harmony.

Wolfe - the English general when Quebec was won.

Wilkie — Director of the Imperial Bank in Toronto when the railway was completed.

Founding of the Colony

A. THE LAITY

"It is a difficult question to answer, whether great leaders create great circumstances, or whether great circumstances create great leaders," said the ancient wise man, clearing his throat, pushing back his horn-rimmed glasses, and laying a forefinger on the side of his nose, as he gazed thoughtfully at the map before him. Then he said slowly, "That can be debated." But we can assure the respected wise man that with regard to the history of the founding of St. Joseph's Colony, a debate is definitely not necessary because both factors, the circumstances as well as the leaders were fortunately bound together with happy results. The circumstances: a fertile, easily tilled prairie and a government which granted each immigrant 160 acres of land with the only stipulation that it be broken. A certain verse that a clever fellow scribbled on the wall of a land office, says:

> Hier wird es nicht gepfiffen, Hier wird zugegriffen! Here there is no time for whistling Here you have to work!

To take up any quarter section would be easy. If a person is indifferent as to whether the land is good or poor, whether the neighbourhood is settled by Protestants or unbelievers, then the choice of land is a simple task; but if a person has set his aim on first class wheat land in a settlement of upright German Catholics, then there will be many a heartbreak before the plan of finding land, settling on it, and erecting buildings is accomplished. The magnitude of such an undertaking becomes clear when one considers that during those early years immigrants were streaming in annually by the thousands. The influx of settlers into northwest Canada in the search of land, was one of the greatest treks the world had ever seen. The immense flood of humanity comprised all nationalities, languages and religions. How the Catholic people and especially the German Catholics were able to settle in a homogeneous group in such confusion is a real accomplishment. That required outstanding leadership and saintly layman who were prudent and energetic. As this is being written, the telephone rings:

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"Hello, Reverend Father here, who is calling?"

"This is F.J. Lange. Praise to God, Father."

"Praised be God, Mr. Lange."

"I'm just passing through, and I have a request to make, Father. A German Catholic who has arrived from overseas would like to see some farm land in your parish."

"Good, Mr. Lange, he is certainly welcome. You are passing through; why don't you visit for awhile?"

"Many thanks for your invitation, Father, but I cannot accept it this time. I'm in a hurry."

"In a hurry? Always travelling because a new immigrant needs help!"

"Well, yes, it has to be done; old horses die in the harness."

"Yes, but old horses should get a rest occasionally. Where were you last week?"

"Way up north in the new St. Boniface Colony. I had to make my way through bush and muskeg in search for fitting homesteads for our people. The mosquitoes were terrible."

"Your zeal for the welfare of the German Catholics just cannot be matched! Well, good-bye, Mr. Lange."

"Good-bye, Reverend Father."

That was Mr. Lange, the principal leader in the founding of the colony. Occasionally, there is a man who sets a goal for himself and then tenaciously carries it out. For a period of nearly thirty years, Mr. Lange aided new German settlers in finding a home. Mr. Lange lost his mother when he was but a child, and as a young boy came with his father to the United States. He studied at Kansas State and Harvard universities. After completion of his studies he taught high school at St. Paul, Minnesota. Mr. Lange wrote, "St. Paul was a thoroughfare for all land seekers travelling to the northwest, and it struck me that there were no arrangements made for German immigrants to settle in German districts."

In August 1902, after a futile attempt to find homesteads for 17 new families in northern Minnesota where the land was already all taken. Mr. Lange investigated the possibility of settling in the Canadian West. The result of his efforts in that same year, was the founding of the Windthorst Community in southern Saskatchewan. Mr. Lange reported the following: "At the same time, the Benedictine Fathers of Collegeville, Minnesota were travelling through western Canada in an area west and northwest of Humboldt to seek out land for St. Peter's Colony. I was invited to oversee the settlement of this area." The success of his efforts were never in doubt. In a period of two years, according to Mr. Lange, the colony was practically filled with settlers. At this time, Mr. Lange reported the following: "As I was guiding the settlement of St. Peter's Colony, I encountered many people who were dissatisfied with the land because there was too much bush and brush (thickets). This opinion was particularly prevalent among settlers from south Russia and from the western United States. In order to satisfy these people, and since most of the land in St. Peter's Colony was already taken, I resolved to found a new colony on the wide, open prairie. On July 25, 1904, I left Rosthern with a horse and buggy to travel to Saskatoon and from there southwest to where Rosetown is today. From there I travelled in a northwesterly direction towards the south end of Tramping Lake. I crossed Eagle Creek and reached the lake on July 28. Following the west side, I travelled to the north end of Tramping Lake, I returned down the east side, then back to Saskatoon and Rosthern. My impressions of the region were extremely good. The land was much more level and even, with good soil, and westward from a point 25 miles west of Saskatoon, all land was open to settlement. I hired and sent out eight men, at my own cost, to examine the soil conditions carefully. They worked until winter and made an accurate report on all homesteads beginning at the present site of Wilkie in the north end of the colony to Ermine in the south, a strip of land, a treasure land some 50 miles long and 25 miles wide." Such was the report of Mr. Lange. A newspaper article about the survey of the land and soil tests is worthwhile repeating:

A Zig-zag Trip Through the New St. Joseph's Colony

"On August 24, 1904, we set out to inspect the new St. Joseph's Colony which is situated 35 miles south of Battleford. We spent two months there travelling back and forth across the colony from one end to the other. The land was either government or homestead land. In planning the colony, efforts were made to pick the choicest homestead land that was still available in Canada. A choice was made, and it seems now that the best selection has been made. There is sort of a highland that stretches along Eagle Creek and Tramping Lake at a width of 12 to 20 miles. Eagle Creek flows through a narrow and deep valley which is 150 to 200 feet in depth and slopes out on either side.

The whole area is open prairie and completely level. The soil is of good quality, on the average six inches of black soil with clay below. There are a few rocks to be found, but some townships are entirely free of them. For example, in the southern part where there is from 18 to 24 inches of dark clay, not a rock can be found. There is very little wood in the area. The only place where some trees are found is in the ravines of Tramping Lake. In that area, there would be enough wood for houses as well as for fuel. Some 40 miles northeast and southeast of Tramping

Lake, there is a considerable amount of wood. It seems that the area was once covered by many more trees because there are many clumps of trees which are half burnt. It would be better if there were more trees; at least the people could provide themselves with wood even if they have to travel some distance to get it. On the other hand, however, without trees there was only half the work as compared to bush country where all the trees had to be cleared first at the expense of much time and effort. Those that had 160 acres of open prairie could till it from one end to the other while those who had some bush on their land had to clear that first if they wanted a good farm.

There seems to be plenty of wild game in the colony. We saw antelopes in herds of 30 to 40 and plenty of foxes and badgers; there are thousands of ducks on the lakes.

A large number of homesteads in the colony are nearly perfect, that is, excellent soil, free of stones and alkali, and so level that the entire 160 acres can be ploughed as a single field. The best homesteads naturally were settled first.

In general, our impressions of the whole area were excellent, and anyone seeing the area would have to agree with us. If anyone is seeking first class prairie land, he cannot find any better than in St. Joseph's Colony. Report by: Wm. Engels, Rosthern, Sask., Theodore Peters, Hoodoo, Sask., George Gerwing, Dead Moose Lake, Sask., Alois Engels, Leofeld, Sask., Jacob Britz, Muenster, Sask., Clem Kuemper, Caroll, Iowa."

During the settlement of the prairies, it was necessary obviously to arrange for provisions to be brought in regularly until the settlers became self-sufficient. Usually this was done by regular trips by wagon out of Rosthern. On one occasion when the wagon with the provisions could not reach its destination, the guide either being annoyed by his mistake or just being thoughtless, emptied the supplies of food on the open prairie and returned to Rosthern. Mr. Lange immediately prepared a second wagon with provisions, arranged for a horse and rode ahead of the wagon in search of the provisions. Certain of his direction, Mr. Lange set out for his first stopping point at Des Charley's place at the 60-mile bush. In his haste, he omitted taking

along proper clothing and was dressed in light summer wear only. But he could not attain his destination before nightfall and was forced to camp in the open withou protection. It was the first of October and a very cold night.

After a long night, the beginning of a new day finally th dawned. In the glimmer, he noticed to his astonishmer co that he had spent the night on the edge of a deep valley. Relieved, he spied the tent of some Métis Indians who were feasting on a freshly killed antelope. He hastened to the camp, but because of hunger, cold and weakness, he could not immediately speak. The people were very helpful and gave him some refreshment. After he had regained his strength somewhat, he proceeded on his journey and after a short ride he found the supply of provisions which the first driver had left. All the food was intact. Not a wolf o any wild animal had touched it. Mr. Lange went alone further west and followed a trail which passed somewhere between the present Denzil and Macklin. This he followed until he reached the north end of Sounding Lake in Alberta



Mr. F. J. Lange

A remarkable sight greet ed the traveller. The whole area, as far as he could see was covered with bones of animals which had recently died. Mr. Lange made inquiries of a cowboy in the area of the significance of the numerous bones. The information given was as follows: His employer, being assured that cattle could graze throughout the year in Canada as they could in Texas, drove his herd of 10.000 cattle all the way from Texas to northern Alberta. Of 10,000 head of stock, barely 2,000 made it through the winter. However, the owner could easily (

absorb the expensive adventure. The loss of several thousand

eforewas not serious; in Texas he had a ranch of cattle which hou numbered several hundred thousand head.

After his short visit with the cowboy Mr. Lange continued again on his journey westward until he arrived at all, the German settlement at Spring Lake, Alberta. The colony was founded by German-American farmers from Stearns County, Minnesota. Fr. Schulte served as parish er priest in the new parish 26 years ago. Mr. Lange developed a magnificent plan of colonization which rivalled the established St. Joseph's Colony. It was a colony stretching from uld Manitou Lake, north of Macklin, deep into Alberta territory towards Spring Lake with Sullivan Lake on the southern edge - an area the size of half a province. It was a project that would have been three or four times the size of St. Joseph's Colony which contained 77 townships. The undertaking would have been successful if it had had the support of the government. But the immigration officials were of British descent and British Protestants were preferred. In eastern Canada, Catholicism was firmly established in the densely populated province of Quebec. There was some discomfort and anxiety among some people



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Bishop E. Legal, O.M.I.

that the Canadian West would likewise become predominantly Catholic. The French Canadians enjoyed the advantage of being the first settlers, and having equal rights would have been able to carry out their own plan of colonizing the west, but with the other non-British Catholics this did not sit too well.

Mr. Lange had no money at his disposal to publish descriptive information and notices about the new colony in newspapers and Catholic publications. What was to be done? It was useless to expect any success without advertising. The state of affairs

was reported to the Very Rev. E. Legal, O.M.I. at that

time Bishop of St. Albert, Alberta. The Bishop took usin. the concern by writing a personal letter to Sir Wilfre Laurier, Prime Minister of Canada, and entreated the famous statesman to mediate in this important matter. An part Mr. Lange? Concerning the crisis, whether there would be a colony or not, he wrote, "I also went to Ottawa to see! help from the government. The immigration office sale they could do nothing for me; since my efforts were directed inc towards Catholics only, they could not grant any air money. It happened that when I was in Ottawa, the Minister of Interior (a Protestant) who was in charge of the imm gration department, resigned his position. Until another minister was named, Sir Wilfred Laurier assumed the portfolio. Laurier, a French-Canadian,* immediately appointed me as immigration agent with \$100 monthly salary, with St. Paul, Minnesota as my headquarters."

It was at this time that the present Archbishop of Winnipeg, Msgr. A. A. Sinnott, who also was secretary to the Apostolic delegate in Ottawa, took up the cause of the Catholics with the authorities as did Mr. Lange. His efforts



Archbishop A. A. Sinnott

as well as those of Bishop Legal have earned them the overwhelming gratitude all German Catholics in St. Joseph's Colony.

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Thus, in very short order, a favourable turn of events occurred. A beginning, although modest had been made. It was regrettable that Sir Laurier held the portfolio only a short time. Mr. Lange reported in this regard, "The newly appointed Minister of the Interior was not sympathetic to the cause of the German Catholics. Hardly two weeks after his appointment, I was transferred from St. Paul to Milwaukee, Wiscon-

^{*} Incidently, it should be noted that the French-Canadians were very sympathetic to the cause of the German Catholics in Canada.

k lisin, where I was to work in the office of a Canadian government agent. The immigration department refused Art funds to advertise in German Catholic newspapers and pamphlets. I could live quite well on my salary, but little could I do for St. Joseph's Colony." The C.P.R. was persuaded to pay for some of the advertising, but since this was by far not enough, Mr. Lange spent much of his own income for this purpose.

The newly formed "Catholic Colonization Society" ster with F. J. Lange as president, F. Bens as secretary, and her under the spiritual guidance of the Oblate priests, Father J. Laufer, A. Suffa, W. Schulte, advertised in various leading Catholic newspapers in the U.S.A. and in other foreign countries, especially in Russia. The advertisements provided information about the new German Catholic Colony. The success of the advertising was tremendous and immigration to the district was unprecedented.

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A flood of immigration was reported and the Society was preparing to receive them. But Mr. Lange no longer had the means to finance the burden of advertising. He reports on this, "I had to use all my income for advertising. I wrote to the government asking them to cover the costs of advertising as they had promised. The answer I received was: Since I am not satisfied with the regulations of the government, my services will no longer be required." That was in the year 1906. It was a hard blow for the courageous Catholic pioneers as well as for the German Catholic immigrants who were to come to the Canadian West. Subsequently, there never was another project undertaken comparable to that of St. Joseph's Colony.

In acknowledgement of Mr. Lange's service in Catholic immigration to the West, the following excerpts are quoted:

NOTE: The Rev. Fathers A. Suffa, O.M.I. and W. Schulte, O.M.I. were not directly involved with the settlement within the colony because their work in their own areas distant from the colony made such a demand on their time an impossibility. Rev. Father J. Laufer was the spiritual leader, and he chose an excellent and highly qualified assistant by the name of Father Th. Schweers, O.M.I. Along with Mr. Lange, the two priests must be considered as the true founders of the colony.

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Dear Mr. Lange:

You have guided our German Catholics in the settlement of this excellent country, and I am certain that the are all very grateful to you. You have displayed a resinterest in the welfare of Catholicism and have taken many pains and trouble to do so. In the name of our Catholic settlers, I express a heartfelt thanks.

I remain yours devotedly in Christ and Mary.

Father Jos. Laufer, O.M.

"He (Mr. Lange) is not just an ordinary person; he endured his destiny, helped many a man to success and prosperity, but himself remained poor." (Fr. Pietsch, O.M.I., Assistant General, Oblate General House, Rome, Italy).

When speaking of the early efforts of the laity, the service of Mr. W. Bens cannot be omitted. Mr. Bens was secretary of the Catholic Colonization Society. As an official of the society, he attended to his duties with great skill prudence, honesty and accuracy. Often he led groups of settlers to their homesteads and as often as possible, if there was a choice of homesteads, he respected the wishes of the settlers. Due to his obliging nature, Mr. Bens did much to fit the lone settler and his family into the general pattern of settlement. Later, he himself settled in the neighbourhood of Grosswerder on a farm which he is operating to this day. In the present lean years in agriculture (crop failures, drop in prices of farm products), Mr. Bens, as all the other farmers, has to endure patiently the hardships in the knowledge that after the lean years the fat years will surely follow.

B. THE REVEREND CLERGY

The founding and development of such a large Catholic colony was possible only through the co-operation of people of many different backgrounds. The small number of German priests could not carry out the work of organization, and perhaps just as well, because the laity could probably do it as well or better. But at the same time, the

toil and efforts of the people would have had no success if the Church authorities as well as the individual priests had not shown a sincere interest in their work. It was



Bishop Pascal, O.M.I.

the German Oblates who the way in seeking permission to found the St. Joseph's Colony within the boundaries of the Diocese of Prince Albert, A member of the Oblate Congregation, namely Bishop Albert Pascal, O.M.I. was the person who graciously granted permission. He belonged to the same order as Bishop Emil Legal, O.M.I. of St. Albert, who as previously mentioned, had written to Sir Wilfred. Prime Minister in Ottawa, to request aid from the government for the colony.

With the consent and blessing of the Church officials, the members of the Catholic Colonization Society began their work. The members of the organization searched the area for a suitable district and then disseminated information about the settlement in newspapers, pamphlets and advertisements; they also aided the settlers in making a choice of homestead and in registering it. Thus, settlement could begin.

To provide stability during the development and expansion of the colony, the co-operation of the priest was of utmost necessity. There were many difficult days in the beginning of a homestead. Many a new arrival became despondent. But there was the word and example of the priest which engendered new hope and strengthened their courage. The priests lived with them and suffered with them in heat and cold, hunger and thirst, and in depressing loneliness. Many a priest today will jokingly refer to the difficult early times. But it must not be forgotten the settlement of the colony had its share of misery and self-denial for the priest as well.

In recognition of the Oblate's skillful handling of the flood of immigration, the Church authorities transferred the care of souls to the Congregation of Oblates — "in

perpetuity." The document was signed by Bishop Pasynati of Prince Albert in 1910. The document designated 11 the district as "Pascal and dependent missions." Pascal was thinto name of the present parish at Leipzig. From here the othe 1905 parishes took root — the present parishes as well as the Sas farther east and west adjacent as Rosenheim, Provo; ing tot Cadogan, Ermine and Rutland.

On September 17, 1925, the original document of Bish, bla Pascal, O.M.I. was reasserted by the Superior General the Oblates, Archbishop Dontenwill and His Grace Joseph H. Prud'homme, D.D., Bishop of Prince Albert and Saska toon. It had the approval of Rome which officially designate the boundaries of the mission area covering 77 township. and settled by the flourishing German parishes in the Tramping Lake district.

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On the first arrival of the Oblates in St. Joseph's Colony, the following is recorded, "Praise to Jesus Christ!" With this Catholic greeting, the clergy were always pleasanly addressed, and they always answered, "Forever and even Amen."

It was the beginning of May 1905 in Saskatoon which at that time was a town with 300 population; the name of the clergyman was Father Theodore Schweers, O.M.I.

"Well, are you by any chance German?" Father Schweer: asked a young man who doffed his hat to the priest.

"Certainly, I am German-American, born in Madison Wisconsin. My name is John Zimmer."

"Are you perhaps planning to travel to the new St. Joseph's Colony?"

"Yes, Reverend Father, that is my plan, and I want to take the train to Battleford which is the nearest station to the colony."

"Well, that is splendid. There are other Catholic people here seeking new homes, and tomorrow we will be leaving by wagon for the colony. Why don't you come with us?"

"Oh, I would be happy to come, Father."

The names of the other settlers were Messrs. Dominic and Jacob Mueller, and Frank Perlinger. Father Schweers had come from Germany, Dominic and Jacob Mueller from Russia, Frank Perlinger from Austria and John Zimmer from the United States. These five men were the nucleus of St. Joseph's Colony. They were an example for all

Pascinationalities who eventually comprised the population of the colony. With reference to that trip of the small caravan s thinto the promised land, Father Schweers wrote, "On May 5, oth 1905, we left for the prairies for the first time. We left from hes Saskatoon which was about 120 miles to the east of Trampvo; ing Lake, the main lake in the new colony. We were a total of five men, well supplied with bread, eggs, meat, shy blankets and weapons, and we started off west towards Tramping Lake in a hopeful and adventuresome spirit." Twenty-five miles were covered the first day and Mr. John Zimmer relates that the caravan stayed overnight with an ter American named Tom Peet who today resides not far from Asquith. He treated his guests very hospitably. Tom Peet in. the was a great fan of baseball and he took great pains to explain to his travellers the rules and fine points of the game. But he wasn't entirely convinced that these "Dutchh s men" understood anything about the game. The men were complete blockheads when it came to baseball and knew as much about the game as a cat knows about Sunday. After the explanation of the game came the practice, and a regular baseball game was organized with Tom Peet and some of his friends on one side and the five on the other. Tom Peet, John Zimmer tells us, had a strange look on his face when he and his veteran team were beaten by the "Dutchmen." Next day, the caravan got off to an early start. There were three wagons, two belonging to the two Muellers and the other to Frank Perlinger. During the afternoon of the second day, a heavy rain began to pour as if from buckets, so heavy that an early stop was necessitated.

Father Schweers, O.M.I., reported, "Our good humour cooled considerably during the heavy rainfall since we were soaked to the skin. Such an adventure, we didn't particularly relish as we lay dejected under our wet blankets. And thus, as we quietly lay there thinking about our wretchedness, suddenly without any warning a voice called out, 'I just don't care if the whole world should pass away tomorrow.'* We laughed and joked till morning."

The rain naturally delayed the caravan's progress. There were many deep marshy holes through which one team of horses could not draw the wagon; then two teams

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^{*}The voice of Frank Perlinger.

were used to cross the bad spots. This too slowed dov dar the trip to a snail's pace. On the evening before thei sea arrival in the Tramping Lake district, the pilgrims stopper still at the so-called 60-mile bush where the previously mentioned the Métis Indian, Des Charley, lived in his hut. Des Charles was a sincere and faithful soul completely trustworthy. The missionaries often staved with him overnight, and when cr occasion some of his friends and their families happened to be visiting, Holy Mass would be offered.

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T. Schweers and settlers

On this particular evening, Des Charley was preparing to serve his guests a meal which was for special occasions only. In Indian fashion he had stored a piece of meat on the end of a rope pulled high on a tree to keep it out of the sun. At such a height the provisions were safe from various wild animals and dogs. The meat was lowered and Des Charley himself prepared it. The travellers, however, were eating very daintly for they couldn't develop a taste for his cooking; it tasted like a mixture of tobacco, soot and leather.

The rain fell during the whole night. The Métis' house was not prepared for such a downpour and, therefore, water came in through the roof and cracks in the walls.

Next morning, Father Schweers said Mass. Mr. Dominic Mueller commented, "We stood during Mass because we couldn't kneel in the six inches of water."

Full of hope, the caravan continued again the next day with the aim of reaching its destination before evening. But again they were cheated of their desire, the day ended. dove darkness fell and the marker could not be seen by their their searching eyes. Depressed, their hopes shattered and rain one still falling, they prepared to settle down for the night in one the open prairie. The wagons provided little shelter against the wet weather, so they placed skins and horse blankets. The on the ground, crawled between them and managed as well as they could in their primitive shelters.

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Mr. Dominic Mueller was awake very early before his companions were roused from their slumber. He hoped to be the first to spy their destination and joyfully announce the good news. "But," he relates, "Father Schweers already was up pacing back and forth on the prairie. In one hand he had an umbrella which he had brought with him from Germany; thus, he sheltered himself while praying his breviary." I greeted the priest and asked him why he was up so early? Father Schweers answered, "Well, why not? You always have the heaviest work as we travel, so the least I can do is to pray a little for you early in the morning so that things will go well."

The place where they camped is the approximate site of where Leipzig is today and one mile from their destination. As soon as the travellers were on their way and had crossed a few small hills, they could see the lone tent in the distance. On discovering the tent, they became like the Three Kings when they again saw the star they were following; they were overjoyed.

And their joy was well founded, for the tent was like the cornerstone of a cathedral, the mark of an immense Catholic enterprise. It was like the mustard seed that grew into the large tree of a colony. It was to be a community pervaded by a genuine Christian spirit where the Church and religious institutions were secure.

Father Schweers, O.M.I. and his fellow travellers, however, were not the first newcomers to the colony; there were three settlers in the neighbourhood. These three pioneers were the original settlers in St. Joseph's Colony. They were the following farmers: Frank Wurzer, Melchior Schermann and Rudolph Schmidt, all of them born in Austria. On April 23 they arrived at their new homes coming via Battleford. Their experiences are related later in this book. The previous May W. Bens accompanied by the settlers, B. Schmidt, John Hohnwart and J. Mueller had



The tent

assessed the area. Before woo they left to return to Bat Zim tleford, Mr. W. Bens erected the tent as a marker

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Father Schweers, in reference to the signif:cance of the day of arrival stated, "One often says, greatness has a small cradle, but the beginning seems too tiny!" A smal. wind-torn tent on the dead still prairie was the origin of our great and beautiful settlement in which today there are already many

churches and schools. We arrived on May 11 and that evening after a short prayer, we slept in our new home for the first time.

"The next day, May 12 was the birthday of our colony. Dawn was breaking over the eastern sky and the first rays of the sun flooded across the prairies as we said our morning prayers. It was a beautiful sunrise. Our hopes for the future of the small colony shone as bright as the sun that morning. Truly, everything was small; the first dwelling, our tent; very small was the first altar, and small the room where the men attended the first Holy Mass in the colony. Even so, everything seemed big to us, especially our hopes for a great future." It should be mentioned that Dominic Mueller fabricated a fine altar out of ordinary



The site where the first Mass was offered

Before wood. The honour of serving at the first Mass goes to John Bat Zimmer and Melchior Schermann.

On the same day, the group went in search of some wood. Each went in a different direction. Father Schweers , in remarked about this, "Since I had a good horse and field glasses, I headed in the direction of Tramping Lake, which according to the map was only 4 or 5 miles distant. I had already travelled 4 miles and still I could see nothing of Tramping Lake. Somewhat discouraged, I dismounted and allowed my horse to graze while I climbed a small knoll. When I reached the top, I was astonished to see a wide lake with steep banks. That must be Tramping Lake, Because of the high banks I was unable to see the lake previously. Quite satisfied now, I mounted my horse again to investigate the shoreline. I was extremely happy to find large trees and small bushes in every gully. The problem was solved; our search was successful, and with a gay heart I returned to our camp where the rest were waiting for me. They had found plenty of water but no wood. After I told them



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Father Schweers on horseback

of my discovery of the lake and wood, their gay spirits returned again.

"The following day," Father Schweers continued his narrative, "we returned to Saskatoon again, and without getting stuck in the mud. Getting stuck in pot holes wasn't peculiar to us alone; it was an experience of all immigrants. Immigration and getting stuck in mud went hand in hand. and, as in everything else, one had to learn from experience."

I could tell you of a priest who on nearly every trip on his parish visits in the early days had to remove his shoes and socks and learn the hard lesson of walking barefoot in mud and swamp water.

On the return trip to Saskatoon, Father Schweers had

his first hunting success in the West. He shot his first was rabbit.

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After a few days, the zealous missionary was again returning to the colony which henceforth was to be his place of labour. His report mentions in particular that on May 20 there was a large influx of Catholic families into the colony and their arrival was beset with severe problems and great effort. One sad incident en route was the death of a small child. In great sorrow, the parents had to bury it on the open prairie. Indeed, all the children and even the women were weak and somewhat ill when they arrived in their new home. Luckily, the weather was good so that the men could build sod houses immediately on their arrival.



The first sod house

All the sod houses were built pretty well the same way. To make sods, the prairie was cut several inches thick with a breaking plow and pieces three feet long and about six inches wide were laid one on top of the other as bricks. These sod houses were well suited to prairie climate. They kept the stormy winter out; the cold did not penetrate the sods too easily and in summer they were cool. The first sod house in the colony was completed by Rudolph Schmidt. A roof, under which a family would spend many months, irst was fashioned from wood that was very scarce. The honour of owning a completely finished house belongs to Dominic Mueller. It took him two days of quick work to accomplish the task. Of course, Dominic's house was also built of sods.

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Of the various early building plans, Father Schweers tells, "We priests wanted a better house, that is, a house built of good lumber. As soon as we could get to Battleford by railway, we went there to buy lumber and have it shipped to Tramping Lake. Each trip was an expensive pleasure as the cost was \$15 (60 marks). To make a beginning on the bare prairie was especially costly not only in money but also in sacrifice and self-denial. Until the house was completed, we had to live in a tent. That was very interesting! The tent was kitchen, bedroom, living room, dining room and even the church all in one; there was hardly room for the necessary things such as the stove and table. It was so small that we couldn't stand up straight during Holy Mass; at meal time we sat on boxes instead of chairs which would have added a few more holes to the existing ones that were there already in the ground. We slept with our heads under the table and feet under the stove. Yes, life was certainly interesting then. The wind very conveniently blew the smoke back down the stove pipe and covered the clean dishes with soot; one was nearly convinced that the devil was without doubt sitting on the pipe outside. Life in the old worn tents was a remarkable experience, especially when I was cook and sacristan at the same time.

"Wind and rain were my constant companions and after every rain all my dishes and pots were wet and filthy. To add insult to injury the wind blew the rain down the chimney so that I couldn't start a fire for days sometimes. However, some of the most pleasurable hours were spent when my friends and I were together in the tent and a fierce storm that nearly uprooted the tent was raging outside. When we became worried, we would laugh and joke, and the droll humour helped us to persevere."

Shortly after their arrival on the prairie Father Laufer, superior of the missions, arrived to decide the location of the parish rectory. He came to the colony on Pentecost Sunday, but remained only two days since he was very busy with mission preaching in both Canada and the United



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Sod barn

States. Father Schweers relates further, "When we moved into a new house, things were somewhat better. As soon as the walls were up and a roof on, we moved in and entreated the carpenter to put in the doors and windows even if only temporarily. But haste makes waste says the old proverb. On the very first night just before retiring a terrible storm arose, so fierce that it blew out the lamps. broke the windows and tore the doors off the hinges. In order to save some of the glass, each man headed for a window. The situation became dramatic. Each was calling for help, one calling for a nail, another for a hammer, yet another for a light, and so on. As each one did not wish to leave his part, he began to complain about the lack of co-operation. Luckily, the storm abated as quickly as it arose, but left us with a pile of debris and dejected spirits. To return to our old selves, the men formed a choir and sang the following to the tune of 'O Tannenbaum':

O Tramping Lake, O Tramping Lake, Wie kanst Du mir gefallen!
Da gibt's nicht Regen und nicht Wind, D'rum fiel das Fenster so geschwind', In tausend Scherben kreuz und quer; Ein Pater fiel schon d'rüber her.
O Tramping Lake, O Tramping Lake How can I ever love you!
With the rain and wind
To blow the windows in
In the mess that was everywhere,
A parish priest fell right in it there.

The spontaneous song united the men again and soon nails, hammer and a light were ready to repair the damage."

By the middle of October, the house was completed, a sod barn erected, and a well 43 feet deep had been dug. Life improved with the move into the rectory, but there was little respite from the daily toil for Father Schweers was teaching catechism and English to 25 children in his house. Another man taught the other school subjects. Father Schweers' greatest joy was the teaching of catechism and to see the children hurrying to school each morning with their lunch bags in their hands; some on horseback, some in carts, and some on foot.

The rectory, naturally had to serve also as a church. A small homemade altar stood in the lower room; chairs and benches were not yet available. People came in such large numbers that even the second floor was filled to over-flowing.

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With the approach of winter, Frank Zimmer and Adam Knoble could not settle on their homesteads at Carmelheim. According to the wishes of the priest, they, therefore, erected a building near the rectory as their winter quarters. It was planned to be used later as a church. The parish purchased it and altered it to serve as a church. And so the first parish in the colony was founded and the great difficulties of a beginning were overcome." Thus, the report by Father Schweers on the founding and the origin of the first parish dedicated to St. Pascal.



Rectory and church

The above reports by Father Schweers are taken from his writings published in the Oblate monthly newsletters. More information is available from Father Laufer who was superior in the colony at the time. The information he gathered was mostly oral from the missionaries



Father Laufer, O.M.I.

and the colonists because written sources were no available. One thing i certain though, and that is that whatever Father Schweers said about the difficulties in the found ing days was verified by Ari Father Laufer. All who experienced those diff: we cult times state that a - Me though decisions made en in the colony were with di the approval of the th church authorities, in ex many instances the pries. took the initiative and received approval later.

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Yet, one must not lose sight of the fact that money had to be found for building homes though simple and small, for the upkeep of the missionary, for the necessities for Holy Mass, and for the requirements of the rectory The settlers could not pay for these expenses. Therefore. one can imagine Father Laufer travelling back and forth in his mission work across the prairie visiting the settlers as a father concerned about his children. He would always bring money, or merchandise, or groceries with him. Much as he was needed, Father Laufer could not remain with the settlers continually. He was a very popular mission preacher and often was absent from the parish in his work as a preacher. However, his work in the parish relieved many a difficulty in those first years.

In the following pages, many references will be made to Father Laufer's work and the respect he earned among the colonists.



A first settlement

The Beginnings Of The Colonists

h Arrival at the Colony

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who The names of the first settlers in St. Joseph's Colony lift were given previously, namely Messrs. Frank Wurzer, a Melchior Schermann and Rudolph Schmidt. Their experiences in the difficulties of settlement are typical of the difficulties that all settlers experienced, therefore, some of their adventures are included here. The following is an extract from the reports of Mr. Melchior Schermann:

On April 25, Franz Wurzer, Melchior Schermann and Rudolph Schmidt left Saskatoon. Franz Wurzer owned a team of horses; the other settlers had to be satisfied with oxen. Instead of travelling direct from Saskatoon to St. Joseph's Colony, they travelled to Battleford with the expectation that there would be a guide at their disposal. The report states, "After a day's journey, we stopped. Unexpectedly, the oxen got away on me and they ran 15 miles before I could catch them. It was a laborious chore to recapture the beasts and was possibly only with the help of a good-hearted farmer. The capture was momentarily only, for as soon as I put the harness on them, the rogues became so wild and frightened that they threw me to the ground and dragged me in the dirt for a distance and injured me with two broken ribs. It was night time. I asked to stay overnight at the home of an Englishman. He refused me shelter in his house but he said I could sleep in the straw shed for a price of fifty cents. Next morning, I continued my trip with my animals. That evening we successfully arrived at our next stop-over, an old farmer from Russia who welcomed us, was extremely friendly, and did everything he could to help us. On our way to Battleford we asked several times how far it still was. One answered stating a certain number of miles, another had a different number, another answered cleverly, 'If you drive fast, you will be there soon.' After this rude answer, we didn't ask anymore."



Mr. Franz Wurzel

The travellers finally a with rived at Battleford on Aprad 21 and Melchior Scherman statio found it necessary to pu chase a new team of oxe since his team was completed in cu tired out. The settlers left of e April 23 without a guide, a excel on April 25 they set foot or land the soil of the colony. The had reached their goal had their own home. They re mained a short while on The because they had to procure lumber and various provisions from Battleford.

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During their absence, a sudden snow storm arose on the prairie, dispersing all their animals — some 36 head in number. Instead of begin ning the construction of some

shelter as they had hoped to do, they had to set out ir search of the animals that disappeared. After considerable wandering back and forth across the prairie searching, they came upon the Métis Indian living in the 60-mile bush. Melchior Schermann wrote, "We asked him if he had seen any strange animals around. Des Charley took his telescope and searched the endless flats. He answered, "I can see some strange cattle about 20 miles from here. If you pay me \$25.00, I will round up the cattle and drive them to your homestead.' We paid him and next day the cattle were back at our place of settlement. But five head were missing and they were probably lost. A prairie fire had swept across the whole countryside during the previous year, and consequently, the cattle could barely find any feed. We therefore had to gather fodder by hand from the sloughs and swamps and carry it back to feed the cattle."

Beginning on the Prairie

When the new settler arrived in St. Joseph's Colony

Ily a $A_{\rm Pl}$ with his wagon and cows, and his household effects, he $A_{\rm Pl}$ and travelled about 65 miles from the nearest railway rmax tion. Battleford They were grateful that the trip was tation, Battleford. They were grateful that the trip was oxe accomplished without serious accident. Travelling for days letelin cumbersome, uncovered, unprotected vehicles was a test of endurance. Nerves of steel were necessary as well as excellent health. After some wandering, they finally arrived ot at their homesteads. They compared the description of the The land with the iron peg on the edge of their particular 160 acres, and decided it was the quarter section the government had given them. There they settled on God's wide prairies. Alone they were, not a tree or shrub to be seen anywhere. The effects of such a sight left various impressions on the iors new arrivals. Some were overjoyed because they now owned a large tract of land which they could call their own; some were very depressed to think that they had so little , with which to begin life anew on the desert-like prairie.

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In the seventy years during which the first immigrants came from the Rhineland in Germany to Nebraska, U.S.A., and then to Canada, they wept many a time when they, with wife and children, found themselves on the open prairie lonely and forsaken, without a house or roof over their heads. They had thought emigration to be something very different. "How can the government be so careless in luring the people to the prairies and then leave them there poor and forsaken," they wrote in their letters to the homeland. Separation is difficult! They left their homeland where their existence was difficult, true, but at least they were settled and had the basic necessities of life. With great hopes they left home for the "New World" and when they reached their goal, they found the bare prairie. Here they were to make a new beginning without money, without protection, without buildings, without tools; it must have seemed to them that they were stunned with a blow on the head and then suddenly awakened as if from a fainting spell. But this was their first impression of the prairie and the faint-hearted lost their courage. However, if the progress of mankind were to depend on the fainthearted, one would despair; no property, no progress, no development would be possible. Probably many a settler in the beginning lost heart, but he gathered up his courage and thought to himself that all homesteaders in the West must have gone through such difficult times and yet suggested wonderfully. Therefore, I too, can overcome tipsped tribulations with courage and trust in God!

At first they lived in the tents they had brought wifened them, that is, those who brought a tent. In warm weather the life in the tent was tolerable, except for the swarms time mosquitoes. To ward them off, smudge pots were lit to a protect man and beast. However, the fire would not but mad all night and so everyone suffered the many stings and the insects anyway. Occasionally, they wore mosquit greenetting covering the head and neck for protection. Not it and were prepared with tents. Whether they trusted the weather Jos or were too poor to own one, nevertheless, they arrive rive without a tent. Taking such a chance on the weather cause cat many miseries. During a heavy rainfall, they fled to shelt a through a wagon which obviously did not provide much ne protection.

The very first chore the settlers had to perform was the fa preparation of living quarters. A few who had more money built their homes out of lumber. The vast majority, how-b ever, built with sods which were cut out of the prairie, to laid like bricks and covered with loam. The floor was b smoothed clay or rough boards. The roof was either woode in or made from poplar tree branches laid to form rafters. These were then covered with brush and loam. The inside of such a sod house was usually divided into two rooms a kitchen and a bedroom. The two were often separated by a curtain only. The greatest efforts were made to make the dwelling a liveable and home-like place. Simple religious pictures (printed) hung on the walls, flower pots were on the window sills, chairs and the table were homemade and lacquered or covered with some upholstery. The whole effect was quite impressive,



Settler's house and barn

The process of building a house was often interrupted, isspecially in the earliest settlements, by the dozens of other chores to be done. The fields were not yet as yet Wifenced and the horses and cattle would often run away. the The poor settlers had to spend a large portion of their s time, sometimes days and even weeks, riding 40 to 50 miles to find their animals. Also, of necessity, trips had to be made to town to get basic clothing, utensils, implements and household items. This was time consuming and required great patience since the trip was 60 miles made by wagon and horse or oxen. As has been mentioned before, St. he Joseph's Colony, as the rest of Western Canada, had few rivers or streams. The settlers were therefore forced to catch rainwater for their daily needs. The water was poured through a cloth and boiled to make it fit for drinking. The next most important work was to dig a well, an undertaking that called for the co-operation of the neighbouring e farmers.

Before seed could be planted, the prairie had to be broken and worked. This was extremely hard labour. To turn over the virgin prairie, which had never seen a plow before, required a team of strong animals. The majority of settlers had only poor draft animals which were fed on prairie grass. The cultivation, as a result, was very slow, one furrow being turned after another; the result of one year's work was the cultivation of one acre of land.

There is little to tell about the living habits of the settlers; the variety in meals afforded them great luxury! The meals were noodles and milk for breakfast, milk and noodles for dinner, noodles and milk for supper. Now and then, after the day's work, the farmer would take his gun from the wall and shoot a rabbit or some game which was plentiful on the prairies.

What happened when someone took ill? One just couldn't afford to become sick. But when someone became ill, help was sought with home remedies such as herbs, mustard and other plasters, or wrapping in blankets to cause heavy perspiration. These methods, of course, saved the expensive doctor bills. Ordinarily, the simple life of the settler working hard in fresh air kept him in the best of health. Among all the settlers there was a pervading spirit of unshakeable trust in God and absolute resignation

The greatest danger to life and property was tment prairie fire. The greatest horror to be sure was a fire Regi the night when flames flared up in the distance and clouThey of smoke reddened by the flames seemed like a giant conand ing closer and closer. There was no rescue from such danger, except to quickly plow a fire-break around the buil snow ings or to set a back-fire. In the fire, the prairie woulwer suddenly come alive. All wild game whether running tion flying - rabbits, wolves, antelopes, foxes - were fleen rem for their lives, dashing aimlessly and unconcerned amon the the people. The game, seemingly so tame now, would mak sleit nice roasts if one had time to hunt. A woeful misfortu pre was a human being caught in the fire. Regretfully, there; qu an episode that occurred near Handel of a young farme he wife, mother of several small children, who lost her life me in the treacherous flames of a prairie fire. The loss of Sc life was not a common occurrence but often enough buil co ings, machinery and farming implements were destroyed the

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Summer and autumn would pass and winter arrive th The Canadian winter is a rough companion who in no way has to take second place to his Siberian brother. It would have been better if the colonists, during the first winter: could have been like bears and hibernated in a hole in the earth and slept there. But a human being is not a bear. He is helpless against the fury of the elements and has to endure the grimly cold temperatures. Firewood was a rarity on the prairies except for a wooded area on the east side of Tramping Lake. What was to be done? The very poor laid up a supply of cow dung for winter heating But that didn't last long enough.

Father Schweers describes the conditions: "The cold winter came upon us unexpectedly; a surprise because we were not prepared as yet. By the middle of winter, many were out of firewood, even food provisions were getting very low. What could they do? The snow was so deep, the storms so frequent that a person could hardly venture out. With each passing day, the need became more acute: one settler despaired and committed suicide, another went insane. The latter was an English bachelor who was far from any other settler and off the main lines of traffic. Among the Germans, the need would have reached a crisis

too if help had not arrived. The help came from the governs ment. Upon notification from the missionaries, police from ire Regina, the capital, brought in new provisions and firewood. Plon They had instructions to seek out all the needy families cenand to supply them with the necessities."

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This was no easy task. There were no roads and the oull snow was one metre deep. The gifts the people received you were greatly appreciated. Thanks to their excellent preparag tion for the trip, the police were able to bring aid to the er remotest settlement. Their large snowshoes and particularly nco their boat shaped sleds served them very well. Their nak sleighs were supported by long two-foot wide runners which prevented them from sinking into the deep snow. Consee quently, heavy loads could be transported quite easily in e heavy snow. The colony is forever indebted to the governlife ment in its concern for the settlers. Without a doubt, Father Schweers' request for help from the government saved the [1] colonists. It was the only time that help had to be requested, thank God. And how did the farmers help themselves in the numerous other times of need during those first years? When they were running short of supplies, the young men left to seek work, any kind of work, in the forests of the north, or in the far west in British Columbia, or in the cities to work in offices or the streets. Any kind of work was acceptable, even the heaviest, as long as they could save a penny. Walking for several days on their way to the city did not frighten them. Joe Hofer, now for some years deceased, who lived near Carmelheim told how he walked to Saskatoon and back to seek work and earn some money to support his family. The meagre earnings were spent to procure food, farm implements, horses and oxen, etc. All in all, the first years were filled with difficulties for the colonists. One could certainly write on each settler's sod house the words, "Here reside two brothers named Misery and Labour, but also a good helper called Trust in God."



Help in need

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The settler earned his daily bread by the sweat of a brow, hard work and misery. But in his battle for a livel hood, a saving angel was his comfort at his side and the was his beloved kind Mother, the Catholic Church. She ha never forsaken him. She accompanied him in all his sorro and hardships, raised his feelings of dejection and abanden ment, and strengthened him with her blessing and grave The representatives of the Church, the missionaries, never left his side; they always were his trusted friends, suffering with the colonists during those first years. They starved went without food just as the poorest among the settlers in one word, they were Christ's shepherds. In the writing of this story, there will be many references to the hero deeds of the missionaries in their service of the Churci The following paragraphs tell of their general travels, experiences and work in the early years:

"The snow at a depth of a metre, the extreme cold the continuous storms made life on the open prairie intolerable," wrote Father Schweers in the year 1908 concerning the begining of the colony. "The storm piled up the fine snow around the buildings to a depth of six or seven metre: The banks were often so high that trenches had to be du; to get in and out. To be sure, winter did afford me some pleasure. For example, I did not have to go outside to get some snow; the wind blew it through the walls and the floor boards of my room. Since, I didn't have a well (Father Schweers lived near Revenue at this time), I had to melt snow for drinking water which froze during the night when I forgot to cover it. Everything else in my room was also frozen - potatoes, bread, Mass wine, vinegar, ink. On the whole though, life in the little house was romantic and interesting. If my former comrades of student days could have seen me in my big overcoat, feeding my stove with cow and horse dung to keep warm, they would have laughed at me, but then perhaps not. It was actually very humourous at times. On Easter Sunday a snow storm in early morning piled up the snow so high that only the roof of the house could be seen. I was ready to begin Mass when the place suddenly came alive. In spite of the deep snow, several people had come and requested entry. In order to permit people to come in the snow had to be removed so the door could be opened. Then they slid down the bank right into the house."

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In another episode, Father Schweers tells of the priest's activities, "Usually the priest would leave every Saturday afternoon for a different parish. Two days a week were spent in travelling to visit settlers including those farthest away, to offer Holy Mass, instruct children and preach. These trips were not always without event. Sometimes one had to unhitch the horse, camp on the open prairie, and sleep under the buggy or even under the open sky. Usually, however, I would reach my destination in time. I can remember only one time when I was late; instead of arriving at 10:00 o'clock in the morning, I did not get there until 4:00 in the afternoon. And this happened in the middle of winter on my way from the east side of Tramping Lake to the west side. An unexpected storm caused me to lose my way."

And how did the missionary manage when there was no church building as yet among a group of settlers? He tried to choose the largest house in the settlement which he could reach in a day's trip by buggy or sleigh; he would arrive tired and hungry and, in winter chilled through. Church services were held the next day. Even the largest house would not afford room for all the settlers but they pushed and squeezed like patient sheep and often achieved the impossible. A table bureau served as an altar. It was covered with white cloths, sometimes with a few paper flowers sewn to it; in the background, a few religious pictures hung on the wall. When there were no candlesticks, a vase or cup filled with sand or salt would hold the candle. The vestments, missal, chalice and other necessities for Mass were supplied by the priest. Long before Mass, the farmers would arrive in all sorts of conveyances: carts, carriages and in winter, sleighs as well as some on horseback and some on foot. The families brought their children. Those who were very distant usually took a ride with a neighbour who had a wagon. There were many times when young men, whether in summer or winter, travelled a distance of twelve miles on foot. Already in the dark of the night they would startice out often fasting in order to receive Communion. Whe although the people had assembled, confessions were heard in on from corner of the room. After confessions, there was catechism distribution for the children who often were without religion unw teaching or Mass for a whole year. Finally, high Mass would begin with singing for which the settlers were always property.



Father Schweers on his parish visits

pared. Usually there where 1:0 Mass servers. The congregation surrounded the altar and were so close that the priest barely had enough room to make the necessary genuflections. The people listened attentively and devotedly to the sermon; since the settlers did not often have the opportunity to attend Mass, they dearly appreciated the grace of Holy Mass. Everyone pres

ent saw the poverty of the situation: the altar, the appointments, the room, in short, all the surroundings in which Mass was being celebrated were so primitive. The people wished they could provide the Lord with a better environment, but they themselves had nothing as yet, so they did the best they could, and the good Lord seeing their good will was satisfied. The priest sang and prayed at the altar for the community and for himself. The people prayed for the priest, their families and themselves; the gathering was the Catholic Church on earth, the communion of saints with the invisible angelic host singing above them, "Praise be to God and peace to men of good will!" After the service, there was the usual good-natured get-together talking about various things, and as they left each and everyone pressed Father's hand with the greeting, "Praised be Jesus Christ." They then scattered throughout the parish in all directions. Vespers, afternoon devotions and Benediction were only dreams as vet.

As soon as Mass was over, the priest made his visits from house to house. The sick were visited and the opportunity afforded them to receive the sacraments. The priest had to visit those Catholics too who were lax in the pracstartice of their faith. Among the settlers there were some who, Whe although Catholics, had for some reason become alienated of from the Church. Some reasons for their laxity were great hish distance from the church, a non-Catholic neighbourhood, yiou unwholesome companions, and often just plain carelessness out and negligence. The occasional short visits with the indifference ent Catholics were usually successful, if the priest had the patience to deal with them and not pressure them too egg. greatly.

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Fr. Palm, Fr. Schwebius, Fr. Krist, Fr. Guth, Fr. Schweers

Then there were throngs of children that had to be prepared for their first confession and Holy Communion. During these days, the priest lived with his people sharing with them the poor dwelling and fare; in his zeal for the spiritual welfare of his people, the priest had to forget his own comforts. As soon as the missionary had completed his duties in one settlement, he would be off by buggy or sleigh, in summer or winter, over hill and dale to another distant parish to repeat the whole procedure.

This then is some description of the life of a mission and ary in those early days of the colony. It should be mention we that in the course of the church year there are importan after feast days. The fact that these are celebrated and honour As I to this day is due mainly to the self-sacrifice and the asked tremendous capacity for work of the missionaries in their had efforts to hold services on these days. The impressions left I su on the visitor from abroad were unforgettable, especialy mei wh if he was a missionary for the first time and had to undertake mission work immediately. Father Pietsch, O.M.I. in his fine booklet, The Germans in Western Canada, wrote "In order to give the reader some idea of the hardships of life at this time, I wish to tell briefly of my experience on the feast of Christmas, 1921.

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"My first visit to St. Joseph's Colony was at Denzi. Father Peter Bieler, the missionary there, had four parishes to oversee: I was to look after two of them so as to make it possible for all the faithful in the area to attend Mass on the holy feast. At about nine o'clock, I arrived at the first church which was already heated, for without heat services were unthinkable. The people crowded around the confessional. I began immediately and it was one o'clock in the morning when the last sinner was absolved. Finally, I offered Mass and preached a sermon to the packed church; then followed the Shepherd's Mass and Benediction. At three o'clock in the morning the people dispersed across the open prairie to the tune of sleigh bells; their Christmas duty was fulfilled. I, however, taking a ride with a farmer, was off to Rosary Church.

"At five o'clock in the morning, we arrived at the farmer's house where I rested for a while. After three hours, we headed for Rosarv Church which stood on a hill and was visible from a great distance. Here, too, the confessional was soon besieged. Mass was to begin at 10:30, but some of the parishioners told me that I don't have to be too exact about the time. The waiting was a test of patience between the good people and this foreign European in the confessional. Noon arrived and I was still sitting in the box. My patience ran out; certainly the large crowd of faithful couldn't be expected to spend all of Christmas Day in the church. I decided, therefore, that those waiting for confession should return after Mass. Thus, we finally started, ssich and with the sermon and Benediction it was 1:30 before iong we were finished. There were some twenty confessions rtan after Mass; they remained until 2:00 p.m. fasting all the while. ur & As I finished with them and was preparing to leave, I was the asked to baptize a child. This was a difficult task because I their had no baptismal water, no holy oil, nor the ritual with me. lef I suggested to the father of the child that perhaps arrangealy ment can be made to baptize on the following Sunday when Father Bieler would be here. The parent stated, MI however, that the child was sick and may not live that long. We then melted some snow in a basin and performed the urgent baptism. Finally we returned to the home of the farmer, a Bohemian and my driver, and at four o'clock in the afternoon I sat down with his family to have breakfast, dinner and supper all in one meal.

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"My day's work was not finished yet. When I arrived back at Denzil, a sleigh was already waiting for me to take me to the next mission post, Grosswerder, where I was scheduled to celebrate Mass on St. Stephen's Day. A young man born in Berlin, a convert, was my driver. The fast, high-stepping steeds seemed to be of Swedish stock. We had a few adventures on the way. First of all, we upset the sleigh on a steep snow bank; then we lost our way and had to search for a long time in the pitch black darkness until we found the trail again; finally, we got into such deep snow that we could easily have frozen to death if we had not come upon a fence which we could follow. How happy we were when, after a three-hour drive and chilled to the bone, we could see the lights of the rectory at Grosswerder. Father Palm, who also had arrived home only near midnight, welcomed us most hospitably."

Except for Father Laufer, O.M.I., all the missionaries at the founding of St. Joseph's Colony were young priests, newly ordained who left behind their homes, father, mother, brother and sister, took up the staff of the apostles and travelled across the ocean to a distant land, not knowing what fate awaited them there. They were alone without bonds of family or relatives or friends. In the daily disappointments and disillusions, there was no one to comfort them or help ease their distress. They had to endure their isolation alone, struggle and pray but the tempest of life never bowed the heads of the priests; on the contrary, they were always cheerful and full of vigor. And why not! The the complete trust in God who was their eternal comfort, an berece this was worth more to them than any human consolation character all, the sacramental Lord was their daily companion received.

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Spiritual Retreat 1927 in Provincial House in Regina

The Reverend Fathers (left to right lower row): Fathers Hermandung, O.M.I., Seltman, O.M.I., Boening, O.M.I., Leyendecker, O.M.I. (retreat master), Ueberberg, O.M.I., Brück, O.M.I., Hilland, O.M.I. Riedinger, O.M.I., Kierdorf, O.M.I., Kim, O.M.I., Schoenwasser O.M.I. Second row: Sylla, O.M.I., Plischke, O.M.I., Forner, O.M.I. Brabender, O.M.I., Schulte, O.M.I., Groetschel, O.M.I., Gabriel O.M.I. Third row: Nelz, O.M.I., Kosian, O.M.I., Emil, O.M.I., Hubert O.M.I., Schultz, O.M.I., Bieler, O.M.I., Palm, O.M.I., Kelz, O.M.I. Fourth row: Ruh, O.M.I., Schwebius, O.M.I., Meyer, O.M.I., Boening, O.M.I., Schneider, O.M.I., Bergmann, O.M.I.

The following episode is taken from the pastoral experiences of one of the missionaries. The events in the story speak for themselves.

In the Service of Christian Charity

A fierce northwest wind was blowing across the prairies. The icy wind and biting coldness chilled one to the bone. The mighty storm, like a steel giant, drove every man and beast to seek shelter in a heated room or warm barn. Ice was finger thick on the window panes and snow was piled as high as the buildings; the entire sky and earth was one cloud of snow and sleet. Not a creature ventured out in

Chethe barbarous cold. The lone missionary suddenly rememan bered that today he had to perform an act of Christian tion charity. It would never do for a Catholic Irishman not to ich receive the last honour of the Church, that is, a Christian burial. The distance was forty-three miles! The deceased, before his death, had prayed for a Christian burial. That was enough! The priest would go immediately, even in this weather!

It was in the month of January, 1915, at three o'clock in the afternoon, when Father Schwebius, O.M.I. left Kerrobert in a horse-drawn sleigh. His destination was Netherhill, forty-three miles from Kerrobert. To Ermine, a distance of twelve miles, he followed a well travelled trail. After that the priest faced the untravelled snowy flats. He headed in a southeasterly direction towards Dodsland, and arrived at the village just at nightfall. From here the road twisted around several obstacles to the crossing of the C.P.R. (Canadian Pacific Railway) and the Grand Trunk Railway. A high snow bank towered in front of the missionary and Father Schwebius led the horse, which did not want to go any farther, around the bank hoping to find a good sleigh trail on the other side. But he was unsuccessful. He then decided to allow the horse to follow the railway track trusting that the track would lead him to his destination. "All of a sudden, without warning," the priest wrote, "my horse fell, jumped up and fell again. Where can I be? It seems that the badgers have undermined the whole area." It was so dark that he didn't realize that the horse and sleigh were on the framework of a 70-foot-long wooden bridge. "I got out of the sleigh to study the situation. To be sure, there were the railway ties all neatly in a row, about twelve inches apart. They certainly provided a firm structure for a train but a miserable road for a horse. An animal trying to walk on the open framework and missing its step would find itself in an extreme predicament. Woe is me; what shall I do? The horse fretted and raged wildly to escape from its distress. It was hopeless. We were on a narrow, single-track bridge and turning around was impossible. Then ensued a battle between the horse and me. The horse's legs were dangling between railway ties and I couldn't decide what to do. The animal made every effort to get out of its sad state. I exerted all the strength I had but in the violent pulling back and forth, the bridle tore quickly took the reins and made a halter, but all to no ava

"It was useless to call for help since no one wou hear me anyway. It was late at night, extremely cold, at all the people stayed near a warm stove. On looking b situation over, I came to the conclusion that the oil solution was to get the horse up and then lead it step b step across the bridge. That was easier said than don If I hadn't been on guard, the horse could easily have forced me over the side of the bridge. I could not despa in the horse's ability to raise itself from between the ta It took a long time and the minutes seemed like an eternia After the animal was freed, it continued to step between the ties and fall: I myself fell when I stepped through the spaces and hung there in mid-air. At the same time the horse missed its step and fell on top of me; I was pinned under its massive weight until it freed itself agair and attained a sure footing on the planks.

"Did I pray to the guardian angel of missionaries nethis horrible moment? I certainly did like I never debefore. Finally, after careful, deliberate, step-by-step progress, the end of the bridge was reached and the painful journey was over. Thank God for the rescue! It was a narrow escape from a terrible accident."

The priest was aching and completly fatigued. Exhaused, he sat down on the edge of the sleigh. But the call of duty urged him on; he surely could not stay there. Therefore, onward! His legs were bruised and tired but he kept going through the night in heavy snow until he arrived at the home of a certain Mr. McCormick. There he changed horses, and although he could hardly move his bones, he continued on his way in the dark until 2:30 in the morning. Then he stopped at a farm for some sleep at six o'clock, when the stars were still twinkling in the cold winter night, Father Schwebius was on the road again At 10:00 a.m., the time set for the funeral, Father Schwebius arrived at his destination.

This little drama describes briefly, the perseverance and dauntless courage, together with Christian charity with which the missionaries of St. Joseph's Colony were endowed, the risks they took considering the climate and the great distances on the prairies.

The Founding, Growth and Development of the Parishes

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Gelobt und gepriesen sei ohne End, Jesus im allerheiligsten Sakrament. Praise and honour without end To Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

In 1905, when the first settlers in St. Joseph's Colony arrived in the area of Leipzig, His Excellency, Bishop Pascal, O.M.I. was bishop of Prince Albert. The prelate made it possible, through his gracious assent, for settlers to make their home in St. Joseph's Colony which was part of his diocese. He welcomed the new arrivals and assured them his blessings. In recognition of his support and in gratitude to him, the Oblate Fathers chose St. Pascal of Baylon as the patron of the church in the first parish of the colony. The choice of St. Pascal as the spiritual patron of the parish, in retrospect now, was a very fortunate decision.

St. Pascal was extremely devoted to the Blessed Sacrament. The Church chose him as the patron saint of the Holy Eucharist because of his virtue. People of all walks of life prayed to him for the gift of a deep love for the Sacrament. We all accept the belief that Our Lord under the species of bread and wine is central to our Catholic faith. To honour this sacred Mystery, Catholics everywhere built their churches and adorned them with the finest material that they could afford. The prayers and desires of all true Christians are directed to this central tenet of our holy religion. The Leipzig parish, the first in the colony, particularly honoured and venerated their patron saint,

became the mother parish for all the other parishes St. Joseph's Colony, a fact, of which the parish memlesuperi of St. Pascal can be justly proud.

The beginning of the parish and the beginning of Sthat Joseph's Colony are closely intertwined, as previously note The following is a brief sketch of the development of parish from its humble origin under Reverend Fat le Schweers to the present day. On Pentecost, 1905, Reverer Father Laufer, superior of the colony, arrived for the fix time and immediately won the hearts of all the faith through his affectionate and paternal personality. He mained for several days, relating many stories, both serice and in jest for the amusement, merriment and edification of the people to boost their morale during the difficult time of settlement.

Father Laufer, O.M.I. was a genuine missionary in the true sense of the word. He was sympathetic to the welfare the and well-being of his neighbour, especially the poor. The poverty of the people and the deplorable condition of the church building persuaded the priest to postpone his mission work as such. Often he was away to seek for help ard donations for the settlers. His begging was not in vain. It Christmas 1905 there was a great surprise! Father Laufer arrived with a whole wagon load of "goodies" and like second St. Nicholas, he distributed gifts and alms: clothing, shoes, underwear and provisions to each and every family. None were forgotten. That was a joyous Christmas! Ever today some of the old colonists fondly remember the wonderful deeds of Father Laufer. But alas, his stay in St. Joseph's Colony was not to last much longer. Obedien to the wishes of his superiors, as a devoted missionary Father Laufer, O.M.I., to the disappointment of everyone left Leipzig on the feast of All Saints, 1907.

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The first baptism in the parish took place when Mr. and Mrs. Suchan were blessed with twins in the year 1905; the first death in the parish occurred in the same family when one of the twins died.

Meanwhile, Father Laufer and Father Schweers, who were in charge of the colony, received a most welcome strength of manpower. It was about time; the two were spreading themselves so thinly that their work in salvation was hardly effective. In recognizing the need, the Oblate Krist and Schwebius, O.M.I. In October, 1917 these two priests began their efficacious work in the colony — work that would keep them there for twenty years.

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Rectory and church

After their arrival in the colony, the two missionaries made an amicable division of the developing parishes on the east side of Tramping Lake. Father Krist served the parishes of Carmelheim and St. Mary's which was northwest of the present site of Handel. They regarded the rectory at Pascal as their general residence and lived a monastic life according to the rules and regulations of their order. They hired the services of a young French boy from the 60-mile bush. In the small rectory he was cook, chamberlain, carpenter, locksmith, chimney sweep, sacristan and organist all in one.

Following 1905, several changes were made in the area. Mr. W. Delaney, inspite of his Irish name, was thoroughly German. He opened a store and a post office for the settlers. Since he often travelled to Battleford on other business, he could easily bring the mail. The correct address of the colonists was East Tramping Lake or simply Tramping Lake, but often it was only Battleford.

The little church in the prairies was getting too small for the crowd of people, and expansion became necessary. Building materials had been purchased by Father Laufer in Battleford in the spring of 1907, and was piled against the church building. As soon as the farmers were finishmex with their harvest, the work on the addition began aleade was completed that same year.

Concerning the crop yields in the district in the dance first years, a farmer gives the following account: In the only a few settlers had any cultivated land and thus the test yield in 1906 was very small. The quality of the whover however, was first class. In 1907, heavy frosts caused seriolife damage and the farmers received very low prices for the rails wheat — 22 cents at Battleford. The crop yields of 1) were was average and the price satisfactory. The year 1908 counterprise satisfactory memorable to the farmers because the frapeo threshing machine came into the district. The farmer where first owned one was Mr. Frank Sandmeyer. Since then may old



Inner view

machines have conthin in, of course, but a this time owning asto threshing machine wa ins the wish of ninety per sid cent of the farme s ab The machines could sh be rented from the It larger farmers or own as ed jointly by several of farmers. Since the cost no of these machines was a extremely high and C the upkeep and repart was expensive, the a owning of a threshing f machine just like an t expensive car, often resulted in a beautiful farm going under the hammer of the auctioneer.

The year 1911 was a delightfully memorable year. His Excellency Bishop Pascal, O.M.I. for the first time honoured the parish with his personal visit and bestowed the sacra ment of Confirmation on the occasion. For ten years, as ar ordinary obscure missionary among the Indian tribes of the West, he endured the fullness of all hardships until he

nish inexpectedly received the call from the Pope to be the aleader in the diocese.

1912 was a year of great change. The Wilkie-Leipzig-tl (Handel-Kelfield railway was completed on November 5. The farmers had been hoping and striving for a railway for stseveral years; now it was a reality and their waiting was hover. The train whistle ushered in a new era in the farm riblife on the calm, quiet prairie. Certainly, the building of a crailway was a welcome step forward for the area, but there were shortcomings too. It disturbed the peaceful, unruffled countryside and even became a cause of friction among the people. One example was the decision to move the church of from the country into the new town by the railway. An at old church sacristan coined the following phrase, "Everything has two sides, but the church steeple has four!"

It was comparatively easy to move a house or even a store closer to the railway, but to relocate a church building is not so easy. After all, the steeple does have four sides! Every Tom, Dick and Harry, had something to say about the impending relocation. There were arguments and sharp words and stormy discussions. But who was right? 1: It seemed just too stupid to try to move the church. Some asked, "Wasn't the church now nicely situated in the center of the colony?" "Why wasn't the railway built so as to pass near the church?" The railway officials remained aloof and answered, "That is your business. It is not our concern." Consequently, pencils were sharpened and a letter of petition was fired off to head office, "Sirs, Please be so kind as to reconsider your plan of the route you have chosen for the railway. Please change the plans for the location of the station Pascal so that it will be on higher terrain rather than in a swamp. Higher ground would be more suitable to us in the building of a church." The answer was like that of Pilate, short and to the point, "What is done is done; there will be no change!" It was a disappointment.

So it was decided in 1913 to build a large beautiful church in Leipzig. The dimensions were 95 feet long without the tower, and 40 feet wide.

The first general store was opened by Anton Kaufman and Vincent Schweda.

The year 1914 brought the beginning of the World War, and for Leipzig parish it was a year of penance and mission

services. Reverend Father Bour, O.M.I., was a very succeptul preacher. But his enthusiasm was his downfall; his vinces gave out, he became hoarse and he had to discontinue Father preaching. Reverend Father Hilland, O.M.I., completed the mission and brought the days of grace to a blessed conceptuation.

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The main structure of the church at Leipzig was completed, but just as the hearts of the faithful had been purified and cleansed, so also it seemed appropriate to embel in the inside of the church with propitious finery. The interminduding the arch, was finished except for painting. Including the arch, was finished except for painting. In 1917, the well-known church painter, Imhoff, was engaged to decorate the arch. He adorned the vault with the figure of the Apostles. The work of art exists to this day. So repeople say that a frame church will not last long. The may be. But St. Pascal is more than an ordinary church it is the mother church of the many parishes in St. Joseph Colony, and hopefully will be the model for many more than the church is a symbol, a legacy; it is the visible means to the Christian message. For Catholics, the church always was a sign of their fidelity and resignation!

In 1920, Father Krist as delegate for the province attent ed a general chapter meeting of the Oblates in Rome. his absence, Father Schultz, pastor of the neighbouring parishes of Handel and Carmelheim administered the parish In July of the following year, 1921, Father Krist took h. departure from the Pascal parish in which he had laboured for 15 years. As evidence of the high esteem in which the priest was held, a school district in the vicinity of Leipz was named after him. The tenure of his successor, Father Schultz, was of short duration. His main objective was the Christian education of the youths through the acquisition of a convent. Father Bieler, later in this chapter, tells the story of the convent entitled, "The History of the Founding of Notre Dame Convent, Leipzig, Saskatchewan." Father Schultz was a passionate supporter of the German language which he maintained was basic to the preservation of the faith. This "golden rule" he fully described in a bookle entitled The German Language, by Father Schultz, O.M.1 (published in St. Paul, Minnesota). The booklet is a recom mended reading for all German Catholics. The administration of the three parishes was a burden that one person could

not bear for very long. Thus, in 1923 there was a shift in personnel on the east side of Tramping Lake. Reverend Father Bieler was placed at Leipzig, and Father Schulte at the parishes of Handel and Carmelheim. The following account of events written by Father Bieler describes his work in Leipzig:

"At the beginning of December 1922, I received my obedience to leave for Leipzig as soon as possible and take up my duties there. I got in touch with Father Schultz who was in charge at Leipzig, and on Thursday, January 3, I arrived at my new home. Father Schultz extended a hearty welcome to me, acquainted me with the affairs of the parish, and shortly after Epiphany, he left. Attached to Leipzig were two mission parishes, Handel and Carmelheim. By the end of the month, Father W. Schulte arrived to oversee the work in the missions and I could put all my energies to use in Leipzig.

"The parish of Leipzig, during my administration, had about 100 families — between 500 and 600 souls. The total has risen very little in the last few years.

"I found the church to be spacious, well equipped, and above all, debt free. The rectory was in reasonably good order as well. However, both church and rectory could stand some improvements.

"In order to improve the heating of the church, a new circulating furnace was installed; storm windows improved the appearance of the church, and were installed for the same reason.

"A magnificent monstrance, a new pulpit, a large bell, a new statue of our church patron, are a few of the items acquired during my time.

"The enlargement of the choir loft may not have added to the splendid interior appearance, but it did increase the seating capacity by half again as much without upsetting the heating system.

"In the rectory, the following alterations were undertaken: the foundation was re-enforced, the basement enlarged and a cistern installed. A veranda was added as was a storeroom and a separate entrance to the kitchen. The foundation was stuccoed. The appearance of the rectory was, therefore, much improved and was warm and comfortable.

"The people of Leipzig were most kind-hearted in cam amiable. They were a mixture of Russo-German, Hungaria about Germans and Germans from Germany, but were united a large one force. Their unity and their attachment to their priest character the work of the priest considerably. In the course the time, the Fraternity of the Holy Rosary and the Sodalit reasof Mary were organized. The Society of Catholic Men value one of the strongest in the province.

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"My own special interest had always been in school and the youth. The school in town as well as the three country schools were visited as often as possible for purposes of teaching catechism to the children and be of some assistance to them in their study of the German language.

"In 1923, a large crowd from all parts of the colonymet at Leipzig to celebrate a district Catholic Convention (Katholikentag). His Excellency Bishop Prud'homme was in attendance to witness the demonstration of a national feeling of strength in the church.

"The greatest achievement in the last few years n Leipzig is without a doubt the founding of the Notre Dan e Convent."



Notre Dame Convent

History of the Founding of Notre Dame Convent, Leipzig, Saskatchewan

Soon after the completion of the church in Leipzig ir 1915, the desire for a convent school became evident. Father Krist, pastor at the time, immediately took up the idea in a very practical manner and with the co-operation of the local Volksverein* he set up a building fund which amounted

[·] Parish Association.

to \$500 when Father Krist left the parish. Father Schultz is came in 1920 and during his short stay was so enthusiastic tria about the project that the fund was increased to \$3,100. The ed a large property on which the convent is situated was purcies; chased. However, it would be another four years before the plan for a convent school in Leipzig would become a alit reality. The greatest problem was to find German Sisters va who were prepared to take up settlement.

The honour of persuading the Notre Dame Sisters to settle in the colony belongs without a doubt, to Father Kierdorf, O.M.I. In 1925, Father Kierdorf in his capacity as general secretary of the Volksverein visited the motherhouse of the Sisters in Munich, Bavaria. Here he was able to interest the General administration in settlement in Western Canada.

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Consequently, during the summer of 1926, a delegation of three Notre Dame Sisters arrived in Saskatchewan making inquiries about their destination and potential settlement. Father Kohler, O.M.I. of Kerrobert, at the time superior of the colony, met the Sisters by chance in Regina and since he was returning from there brought the Sisters with him to Leipzig. There they were welcomed as a Godsend. The parish was prepared to offer the Sisters the use of a spacious house and the school board was ready to hire two Sisters the next fall with good salaries.

The Sisters were visibly satisfied with the proposition and on their departure promised to make their decision soon. It did not take long to get an answer and the bishop was only too happy to give his assent.

On August 28, 1926 the first four Sisters from the Canadian Motherhouse in Hamilton, Ontario arrived at Leipzig and received a friendly reception at the rectory. The very next day they were able to move into their house which the parish had purchased for \$2,500 and comfortably accommodated. Not only was there enough room for the small community of Sisters, but also for a number of children. On September 14, Bishop Prud'homme arrived to welcome the Sisters and to bless the convent and chapel.

During the first winter, the Sisters boarded fourteen children. It became immediately evident that there was not

enough room in the building to keep the many boarden base The Sisters soon expressed their concern over the problem The and suggested that either the old convent be enlarged o all a new modern building be constructed. After considerable 80 discussion and deliberation with the provincial house a Hamilton and also with the diocesan administration in Prince Albert, they came to the conclusion to begin construct tion of a new building immediately in the following year.

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It was necessary to raise a capital sum of \$87,000. Arclitect P. Desroches from Edmonton was engaged to draw plans and to supervise the construction.

The parish of Leipzig took an active interest in the new structure. It provided the Sisters with six acres of land near the church to be used as a building site and for a garden. Also, the digging of the basement was done by the parish. The men also hauled thousands of loads of sand and gravel, and delivered all the building materials from the railroad to the construction site. Over and above the labour, the parish donated more than \$7,000 of hard earnel money to the cost of the building.

The digging began on May 31, 1927. On July 24, whe the cornerstone laying ceremonies were held, the basemen and the first storey were nearly complete. His Excellency the Bishop, laid the cornerstone. All the priests of the colony as well as a large crowd of people from the whole territory were present at the ceremony.

By December 28 the new convent was nearly ready for the Sisters to move in. The first Mass was celebrated in the convent chapel the next day. A few days later, after the Christmas holidays, 56 children arrived to take up residence in the magnificent building.

The blessing of the new building was scheduled for September 2, 1928 because the bishop was not available at an earlier date. In the meantime, the exterior of the building was completely finished and the interior to the extent that it left a good impression on the visitor. The ceremony was favoured with beautiful weather and was attended by an unbelievably large crowd from far and wide

The new convent is a very impressive building. It is approximately 100 feet long and 50 feet wide. It has a full

rden basement and three stories. The front displays three gables. bly The building, which is fire-proof, has light and water and d o all modern conveniences, can comfortably provide for about rable 80 children.

e a The Sisters instructed up to and including Grade 12, is preparing the pupils for the Department of Education examinations with great success. Four of the first students entered Normal School and two the University at Saskatoon. Also, five vocations to the Sisterhood came from Leipzig.

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At the present time, the Sisters have been able to pay only the interest on the loan and the whole principal still remains. With God's help, however, and the benevolence of their numerous friends, it is hoped the Sisters will overcome their great difficulties.

May the new convent flourish and continue to thrive to the honour of God and Church and be a blessing for St. Joseph's Colony and all of Canada!

The first settlers at Leipzig were: Joseph Gartner, Alois Sark, Vincent Schweda, Dominic Mueller, Melchior Schermann, Wenzel Suchan, August Franke, Jacob Gerlinsky, John Novakowsky, John Salewsky, Michael Huber, John Schmidt, Stefan Leidl, George Reininger, Simon Stohr, Heinrich Nestmann.

CARMELHEIM

Du in dem braunen Kleide, Karmels Herrin, Gruss sei Dir; Sieh' in Freude, wie im Leide, Flieht die Welt zu Dir - zu Dir! Nim sie auf, sie will verzagen, Nimm sie auf in deine Hut. Hörst sie bald dann dankbar sagen: Liebe Mutter! Jetzt ist's gut.

Lady in a gown of gold, Lady of Carmel, praise to you, In joy and in sorrow The world comes to you, to you! Take them up, they despair, Take them up into your refuge In thanks they all proclaim Dear Mother, now all is well.

Apart from the main traffic stands a beautiful church in a green meadow. Its two towers invite from afar the tired wanderer to stop for adoration and prayer. The churt is dedicated to Our Blessed Lady of Mount Carmel and the area from the beginning even to the present has been called Carmelheim. It is the first parish within the bound aries of St. Joseph's Colony that has the distinction of being entrusted to the care of the Virgin Mary. The plane where the church now stands is not the original spot. The first location was about three miles to the northeast or the S.E.1/4 Sec. 18, Twp. 37, Rge. 18. The first little church rather like a chapel, was built in 1906 by Father Laufe: The measurements of the building, if one can call it one, were only 24 feet long and 16 feet wide. It was built from sod; a church of direful poverty. Father Schwebius wrote about the church, "We in Carmelheim, with the good Lord's permission, used the bare earth as a floor in His church. It was His church and He freely granted us the use of the floor."

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First sod church and first settlers

Reverend Father Laufer was the first pastor for the small group of settlers located near the church. According to some of the older settlers, Father Laufer had boundless trust in God — a trust that never waivered even under

great stress. Father Schwebius tells a story which demonstrated his trust in God, "Besides his regular post as missionary for the area on the southeast of Tramping Lake, Father Laufer also cared for an area outside the colony - a Métis settlement in the 60-mile bush about 35 miles from Carmelheim in a southeasterly direction. The little Indian church was miraculously saved from fire: Father Laufer arrived one day to celebrate Mass with the people who were mostly French. A large prairie fire broke out suddenly and, driven by a strong wind, raced through the underbrush heading straight for the little church. What was to be done? To try to save the church with the fire so close was out of the question. Since human efforts could not possibly stop the flames, Father Laufer in prayer implored St. Joseph, the protector of the colony, to save the church from the menacing fire. As he prayed in his heart, Father Laufer made the sign of the cross in the direction of the fire with the hope that the destructive flames would spare the church. And behold, by the powers of St. Joseph, the bush fire turned and the Indian church was unharmed.

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On All Saints Day, 1907, Father Laufer bade farewell to St. Joseph's Colony and thereafter devoted his time to mission preaching at which he was particularly successful. Father Schwebius followed in his stead. He too, as Father Laufer, resided at the rectory in Leipzig and administered Carmelheim from there. Late in 1909, on the advice of his superiors, he took up a homestead about one mile south of the present church; after the stated time he received title from the government, and immediately transferred it to the Oblates who later sold the land. On his arrival in the parish, Father Schwebius found the church far too small for the number of faithful; it also was in a wretched condition. This was not surprising because the building was intended for temporary use only. Since the building was so poor, it was natural to plan for a new structure. The idea had the complete approval of the people. Concerning the site of the church, the people of the parish held an open meeting and it was noted that the present site was not central to the community. It was therefore decided to build the new church in a different location. They agreed to choose as a site the S.W.1/4, Sec. 6, Twp. 37, Rge. 18. Mr. Peter Leinenweber, who owned the land, donated ten acres to the parish for a church yard. The parishioners war tow the very grateful for his generosity.

The new church was built from logs, with all labe a being donated. Father Schwebius, at the time, wrote, ") we the feast of St. Joseph, the patron of the colony, we decide had to build a better church. Several farmers volunteered the get logs from Lizzard Lake some forty miles distant. invited all parishioners who remained behind to gather a ma the church on the feast of St. Joseph to pray for the driven be so that no accident would befall them." The logs were ha delivered safely; Mr. Schommer was in charge of the whole lee undertaking; Mr. John Schaffhauser was appointed or Father Schwebius to notch the logs to fit properly. It mus ri be pointed out that during the construction, the ardour at ch good will of the parishioners came to the fore; thank Gcl pi the zeal and good will is evident to this day. With skillf i L hands of the builders, the wooden church went up quick v fi and in the same year to the credit of the people of the m parish, it was completely finished.



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Second church built of logs

The log building was covered with planed lumber and painted. Its appearance became quite presentable. The interior was to be plastered. Since the farm people were busy with their work during the summer, Father Schwebius with the help of a knowledgeable old settler by the name of Fanger, travelled to Battleford to get the materials. On the return trip they had a sort of tragic-humourous experience.

It was the height of summer and the sun shone pitilessly on the two travellers sitting high on the wagon heading the unbearable heat but worst of all he was stricken with a serious nosebleed. All the handkerchiefs of both men between the unbearance of one who had been in a fight and got the worst of it. And as Fanger sat beside him quite unaffected and lively it would have appeared that the old man had had an argument with the young priest and had beaten him up. But as Father Schwebius said, "We were hauling material for the house of peace and in this knowledge neither of us had any thoughts of quarreling."

On the completion of the church he said, "This church right now is the most beautiful in the colony."* That same church was well built that to this day it is still weatherproof and serves as a parish hall. The work that Father Laufer had begun during his short stay was now put on a firm footing by his successor. It is obvious that no one missionary during a short term could instill the Christian spirit as could a missionary who over a period of years would grow with the parish, so to speak.

In the fall of 1913, the superiors ordered that a shift of pastors should take place; succeeding Father Schwebius was Father Nelz, O.M.I. who was placed in charge of Carmelheim. The objective of the priest was the spiritual progress of the parish, namely, promoting understanding among the members. In this regard, Father Nelz, with his winsome demeanor and his friendly disposition was a splendid example of benignity and Christian charity. Even today, after many years, the memory of him still lives in the hearts of his former parishioners.

In October 1916, Father Schultz became the parish priest. Because of the increase in the number of settlers, the log church no longer fulfilled the needs of the parish. The construction of a new and larger church became an urgent necessity. But an unexpected storm of controversy arose over the question. The Catholic settlers around the town of Landis united themselves in the aim to have

Note: Such an assertion is common to those who see their own as the best. It has to be noted that St. Joseph's Colony, as the whole Canadian West, was changing and growing rapidly; also it must be remembered that the largest and most beautiful church in one parish would be surpassed by a larger and more beautiful church in another part of the colony, and often during the same year.

the church built at Landis instead of at Carmelheim. Thethe argued that country parishes usually reached a ceramiss level of development and then came to a standstill, that in t town parish in the center of business would grow mo war quickly, and the population in town would increase especial in with more farmers retiring. It was a question of which rem was more important: the church in town or in the countratu Bishop Pascal, O.M.I., in judging the question, gave consider the able weight to the reasoning of the Carmelheim parishion r cov that is, to the energetic debate of their rights suppore me by Father Schultz. The fact that the original settlers broug wh the faith and grounded it in Carmelheim parish, that the wa readiness and self-sacrifice for the needs of the ear he churches was willingly given, and the fact that the fact was church was built at Carmelheim, the first church in h be colony to be dedicated to Mary, swung the decision in favor pr of Carmelheim.

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Next to the business of building a new church. The se hired the services of an experienced and well-qualify th architect, a master at his work, Mr. A. Schroffel from pl Edmonton. He was an Austrian who also built the churg p at Revenue and Rosary Church. After a discussion of the o plan with Father Schultz, Mr. A. Schroffel began the con-t struction of the church. It is built in Roman style. A magnificent loft spans a considerable part of the interior that the church can seat considerably more people that its dimensions would indicate. The double towers will pillars at the entrance make an impressive sight. Fath Schultz's good taste in decoration and display is obvious in the building; also in the skillful craftsmanship that was required in the wood carvings and stenciled artistry.

The people had the highest regard for Father Schul z considering him a conscientious clergyman and distinguished gentleman. With his team of high spirited horses, he was a familiar sight travelling about. When the wild bronches ran away sometimes, everyone in the district had to search until they found them. Everyone would have a good laugh when this happened, but Father Schultz enjoyed the misfortune the most. It is no wonder therefore that the parishioners were very unhappy when he had to leave.

The successor to Father Schultz was Father W. Schulte, O.M.I. who took over the duties in the parish. For him . The new appointment was quite a change. Up to now, his cer a mission work had been in the State of Washington, U.S.A. that in the most westerly part of the United States. He left the molwarm climate of Washington and in February, 1925 arrived ecial in ice- and snow-covered Saskatchewan. Father Schulte whice remembers well his first Sunday and first Mass. The temperun mature was 35 degrees below zero. Only the rough finish of sice the church was completed, that is, the first layer of boards on r covered the exterior. The time for Mass came. All the people, orte men, women and children were able to get into the balcony out where it was warmer because of the rising heat. There it the was bearable. Only a few hearty, weather-proof men in ear heavy overcoats remained down below. Up by the altar it for was so very cold that the water which had been warmed b before Mass had turned to ice. During the sermon, the ver priest's words could be "seen" in his breath. No one had the opportunity to dream and nod during this maiden Te sermon since it was short, very short indeed. Except for for the cold, the new parish was a very satisfying and happy place to work for the priest. The strong faith and spiritual rem piety of the people can be directly attributed to a succession of ardent missionaries who all were the exemplification of the faith.

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It became necessary to continue the oft interrupted work on the inside of the church. Through the generosity of the parishioners, the necessary work was soon underway. The next chore was the laying of the second ply of floorboards and the installation of the pews. After that, the work of finishing the rest of the interior — the walls, the arch, the pillars, the balcony, the doors, window embrasures, etc. - was begun. In this undertaking, the parish was fortunate in having as one of its settlers a young German who was familiar with fine handicrafts. His name was Joseph Veit who was trying to farm for the first time. With the encouragement of the parish priest, Mr. Veit tackled the job of decorating the church. Father Schulte drew sketches of the finishing work to be done and these were carried out so masterfully that without a doubt Carmelheim Church is the most beautiful church finished in stucco work in the colony. To further embellish the interior, the parish obtained two stained glass windows from the Doctor Oidtmann Firm in Germany. These where the first stained

glass windows in St. Joseph's Colony. They were placed on either side of the altar. The picture on the right shows Our Lord with the host in His hand, and the caption, "Ego sum panis vitae" (I am the Bread of Life). At His feet are shown the vast wheat fields. On the left side, the Virgin Mary is depicted in a new form. With her left arm she is holding a sheaf of wheat and her right hand is outstretched in blessing the prairie fields. The heading reads, "Regina Prairie" (Queen of the Prairies!).



The third and present church

Through the good mediation of the Assistant General, Father Pietsch, two oil paintings were obtained from a painter in Rome. They are hanging in the niches by the side altars. Both are original oil paintings. The one picture shows Mary with the child Jesus and holding the scapular medal; at her feet children from all lands kneel in adoration. The other shows the poor souls in Purgatory and indicates the value and power of the Mass in easing their sufferings.

Thus, the description of the parish dedicated to the Mother of the Saviour. The reader is invited to visit the church in Carmelheim, to pray to the Mother of God, and to feel in his heart the touch of her soft, motherly hand.

Mutter, wie einst Deine Hütte In Nazareth war zu shau'n, So in unseres Herzens Mitte Wolle Dir ein Hütt'lein bau'n. Herrsche dort in Freud und Stürmen, Süsse Mutter unseres Herrn, Und so oft sich Wogen türmen, Zeig Dich uns als Meerestern!

(M.H.)

Dear Mother who once found A shelter in Nazareth In our hearts we too Will build a shelter for you. A friend in joy and sorrow, Sweet Mother of our Lord, In the stormy waves of life, Be our guiding light!

(M.H.)

The first settlers in this parish were: Frank Zimmer, John Tschida, Joseph and Andrew Schommer, Bernhard Kletzel, Joseph Jarmin, Peter Leinenweber, John Hofer, Mathias Adrian, Jacob Kaufmann, John Schaffhauser, John and Bernhard Zimmer, Frank Knobel (1905-06), Valentine Götz, John Jolin, Jul. Schulz.

HANDEL

The district of Handel was named by the C.P.R. officials in honour of the German composer, Handel, who for a time lived in England. Even the streets of this town are named after German musicians — Wagner, Mozart, etc. Railway officials planned to name every part of the town after famous musicians. If St. Joseph's Colony would ever hold a music festival, then Handel would certainly be the place for the celebration. But those are the dreams of the future. At the moment, the main concern of the farmers is providing the daily bread. To them, the most welcome music was the hum of the threshing machine at harvest time, and if it was a plentiful harvest, they would especially celebrate with music.

The beginnings of the parish were made in the years 1905-1906. The first settlers within the boundaries of the present parish were Nick Stark (1905), Wendel Gillen, Sr., W. Heltmann, Stephen Bader (1906), together with their families, and Michael Bader, a bachelor. Another pioneer

was Mr. Frank Wurzer, who previously noted, was one of the first settlers in the colony. Father Laufer was the founder of the parish. Since, at this time, the railroad did not yet exist, the people built a small church on the northeast quarter of Section 24, Township 36, Range 20, on the



Mr. and Mrs. Gillen

farm of Mr. Wendel Gillen, Sr. The early missionaries used the home of this family as their "head-quarters." The parish is indebted to the Gillen family for their unstinting hospitality to the priests.

The erection of a church in all parts of the colony can be compared to the words of Ash Wednesday, that is, the floor was of earth, the walls of earth, as well as the roof. Everyone knew the special characteristics of these kind of buildings. The sods were cut from the prairie soil and laid one on top of another

to form a wall. Several rafters of green poplar were put in place and covered with twigs and clay or with boards nailed down.

> Und flinker wie's gedacht, Zähle: Eins, Zwei, Drei, Ohne Hexerei, Stand's Kirchlein unter Dach.

As quick as a flash, Before you could count one, two, three, Without any witchcraft There was the church complete with a roof.

To be sure, the little church at Handel was a step ahead in its construction; instead of the bare earth as a floor, as was common in all other churches, the floor was covered with boards. The altar of the church was put together by a farmer with more love and good-will than with the skilled craftsmanship of a professional cabinet maker. Several homemade benches made up the rest of the church furniture. Was it a sign of the musical names to be used in the town, or just chance, or were the residents of the parish especially talented in music? In any

case, the first furnishing purchased with the contributions of everyone's pennies was a harmonium, commonly called an organ. Poor was the stable at Bethlehem, poor the crib, poor the Holy Family, poor the shepherds, but most wonderful was the angelic singing amid all the poverty, "Praised be God in the highest, and peace to men of good will." Poor, also, was the church at Handel with walls built from mother earth, poor were the church furnishings, poor the missionaries, poor the settlers, but with willing hearts and gay voices they melodically evidenced their inner faith, sang hymns of thanks to God's throne for protection, grace and blessings. The settlers were determined to pray and sing even if it would cost the last farthing.



The sod church

As mentioned previously, the first shepherd and founder of the parish was Father Laufer, O.M.I. He was a conscientious missionary, watching over the settlers who were as yet few in number. He shared with them the hard life of self-denial; he suffered with them the severe difficulties, visited the settlers, took a sincere interest in their activities and progress, and took pains to lighten the problems of the difficult beginnings of the settlers by moral support and words of encouragement. But, alas, fate decreed that Father Laufer was not to be in St. Joseph's Colony for long. The church authorities required him to take up his duties as a mission preacher at which he excelled. For this reason too, Father Laufer was often absent from the colony. At one time a good friend of Father Laufer gave him a splendid

Scottish sheep dog. Since Father Laufer found it very inconvenient to take the animal with him on his travels, he made a gift of it to Mr. Michael Bader. It happened in the middle of winter that the settlers W. Heltmann and Stephan Bader went in search of wood at Sunny Lake, and the sheep dog followed along. They had just finished cutting a cord of wood and were loading it into the sleigh when a snow squall suddenly arose, erasing the sleigh tracks and making it impossible to tell directions in the heavily blowing snow. What was to be done? One of the two suggested, "I think we best stay here until the storm blows over. We have wood to make a good fire so that we will not freeze." "Well," answered the other, "I believe the dog that Father Laufer gave me will lead us back home. At least we'll give it a try." No sooner said than done. They followed the dog with the load of wood, and without error the faithful, clever animal led them directly to their home, the small sod hut on the prairie. But the sharp cold had done its evil work. Noses, cheeks, ears, hands and feet were frozen, and the next day the skin peeled from these areas. The winter of 1906 - 1907 was an extremely cold winter which brought great suffering, misery and hardships to the settlers. The people were very thankful to the government for its help in preventing a serious disaster during the severe winter. A serious situation developed with two young English companions who had settled south of the Four-Mile Lake. They endured such serious frostbite in their little shack that they had to be taken to the hospital in Battleford where their suffering was soon relieved.



Procession in 1906

When Father Laufer left on his mission travels, Father Schweers took his place. The first child born in the parish,

Stephen Bader, was baptized by Father Schweers on December 5, 1906. Father Schwebius followed Father Schweers in 1907. In the beginning of his pastoral duties, Father Schwebius resided with Father Krist, O.M.I. at Pascal near Leipzig, but later in the year 1909, at the request of his superiors, he set up a homestead about a mile south of Carmelheim and from here he administered his parishes. Father Schwebius was not a "stay-at-homer." On the contrary, following in the footsteps of the apostle of the Indians, Father Lacombe, O.M.I., he was continually travelling on his mission work. It was not strange, therefore, that Father Schwebius would travel all day and half the night without regular meals, and at any hour he would knock on a farmhouse door and beg a meal and quarters to rest. His apostolic zeal knew no bounds and he trusted his physical power in the performance of extraordinary feats. The following is an example: In 1911, Father Schwebius celebrated midnight Mass at Christmas in Ermine with High Mass, a sermon and all the communions. At the close of the service about two o'clock in the morning, he took to the road with a good team of horses to Handel some 31 miles distant and there held High Mass with a sermon and communion; without wasting a minute, he was off to Carmelheim nine miles away and there ended the Christmas services with the same series - High Mass, sermon and communions. No wonder that his physical energies were being consumed by his extra-ordinary efforts.

Besides his parish work, Father Schwebius also taught religion and other subjects to the children in the schools. This work he continued until the regular school districts were defined. After a seven-year-period of excellent spiritual labour, Father Schwebius took leave in 1913 to the sad disappointment of all the parishioners.

The completion of the construction of the railway out of Wilkie in the year 1912 resulted in the building of a railway station and the town of Handel with shops, elevators, a bank, etc. The first business was opened by Mr. Gottfried Schaffer who came from Geilenkirchen, Rhineland.

Father Nelz, O.M.I. relieved Father Laufer in 1913 in the administration of the parish. He assessed the situation in the parish immediately on his arrival. Since the old sod church on Gillen's farm was on the verge of ruin,

the construction of a new church was begun in November, 1913. Father Schwebius had already been busy with preparations for the building of a church. A farmer by the name of Steph. Frühstück who lived in the immediate area of the town of Handel, donated five acres of land to the parish. To undertake the building of a church in late fall or early winter is a risky business especially if there should be a sudden change in the weather. But under the pressing circumstances with the old church ready to fall down, it became necessary to act immediately. Everything had to be done quickly. Consequently, the church site suddenly became a beehive of activity — masons, workers, carpenters and joiners all busy from early morning to late at night with hammering, sawing, cutting and nailing. Thanks to the uninterrupted labour, the progress of the work went ahead so speedily that by Christmas the outer shell was completed. To the joy of all the parishioners, Father Nelz held Mass



The present church

for the first time in the new church on December 21, 1913. The erection of the four walls with a roof on it usually requires the lesser expenditure, but to outfit the interior appropriately for church services means the outlay of greater costs. To meet the urgent needs depended on the generosity of the parishioners. Father Nelz's skill as an organizer became evident as well as his innate kindness. His winning smile and his mild manner inspired the people so that donations were copiously made. By summer time the inside was completely finished with a splendid altar, communion rail, various Mass items, pews; in short, all things necessary for the proper celebration of Mass.

The splendid success was due to the generosity of the people manifested in their unstinting efforts in labour and contributions; Father Nelz stated that, "The people of Handel were generous people; I will always have fond and grateful memories." In October, 1916, Father Nelz left this field of labour where he worked so diligently and achieved the completion of the new church. Father Schultz followed in his stead. The priests who had been responsible for the Handel parish up to the present time resided either in Leipzig or, as Father Schwebius did, in Carmelheim. Since then the two parishes of Handel and Carmelheim expanded and increased in population that they became large enough to support each their individual pastors.

It was resolved then to erect a rectory in Handel. Instead of building the rectory on the same property as the church, it was built on a five acre tract obtained from Mr. Frank Wurzer. Coincidentally, the start on the building was made in the month of November as was the church. It is interesting to speculate on the parishioners' preference for the month of November. Perhaps it was considered that in a farming community free labour could be had only after the harvest was finished. Be that as it may, the work went forward as if with the utmost urgency. The interior was completed in fine workmanship during the winter of 1917, and in the spring of 1918 Father Schultz began his residence there. The structure of the rectory was not in the usual style of architecture but reminded one of a modern house in the city suburbs. The Handel parish now possessed two genuine church buildings testifying to the energetic work of two missionary priests. And these great accomplishments were achieved by a small parish in the short span of five years.



Rectory

At the beginning of 1923, the church officials decided on a switch in pastors. In place of Father Schultz, Father Schulte (nearly same name) was put in charge. Arriving after his predecessors had worked so diligently in the organization of the parish, the assuming of duties was like receiving a gift on a platter: a new church, a new rectory, no debts! There was plenty of evidence that the parish was of one true Christian mind, and there remained nothing for the parish priest to do except to penetrate deeper into the spiritual life of his parishioners. Since the number of parish members increased considerably, the choir loft was lengthened to nearly half the church. The smoky furnace was replaced with a new one in the basement of the church. The new furnace in the basement heated so well that even in the coldest weather, the choir sometimes had to leave their high loft for lower levels because of the heat. The parish of Handel, just like the parish at Carmelheim, received two stained glass windows which were placed on either side of the high altar. They were the Crucifixion scene and the Ascension of Christ. They, too, came from the Doctor Oidtmann Firm, Linnich, Germany. The two pictures in their simple colours helped create an atmosphere for adoration and invited the visitor to prayer and inner reflection.

In the description of the growth and development of the parish of Handel one cannot omit a most important aspect. To which patron saint is the little church to be dedicated? A meeting was called of all parishioners. Our Lady was the patron of Carmelheim and Rosary Church. The parish of Handel should also have the Queen of Heaven as its magnificent and majestic patron under the title of "Assumption of Mary," and the annual celebration of the feast will be celebrated on August 15.

The church at Handel is situated near one of the main roads of the province and therefore, especially during the summertime, was surrounded by the hectic traffic of modern life. Hundreds of motor cars enlivened the landscape; some were of the finest carriages and most expensive design, and ran silently as a breath; some were heavily laden trucks which bullied their way along slowly; or finally the Old Timers (rattletraps) which were like noisy rambunctious boys raced through the country as if they owned the whole

world creating a din of bangs and rattles and whistling. During the dry spells in summer, the continuous traffic ground the soil into a fine dust which plagued the nearby residents. The frightful clouds of dust whirled up behind an automobile like a long boa constrictor and settled on the buildings covering them with a grevish-vellow laver. The church site may have been at a disadvantage by being located so near the main line of traffic, but it cannot be denied, that the simple church building with the sign of redemption on its steeple was a reminder to the hurried lives of mankind. Also, the proximity of the church imparted the invitation to many souls to stop for a moment of meditation. It was often noted that an automobile with squeaking brakes would make a sudden halt at the church: the occupants would briefly visit their Lord in the species of bread and continue on their way with God's blessing. And this edifying scene would occur not only during the day but also during the night hours in front of the locked church doors.

Without a doubt, the little church fulfilled a real spiritual need in the highway of life.

Difficulties on the way to church

Father Schwebius, O.M.I. resided on his homestead about a mile south of the present Carmelheim church. From there he visited the people under his spiritual guidance. It happened one day that Father Schwebius on his way to St. Mary's Church with his horse, had to cross a low lying area filled with water and mud. In the middle of the water, the horse stopped and decided to satisfy its appetite on the excellent swamp grass which looked so appetizing there in the deep water. The old mare named Gussy would not move from the mud and the feast of dainties. With some encouraging words and a tug on the reins, Father hoped to remind her of her duty, but the mare unconcerned, went her own way step by step from one blade of grass to the next. It became necessary to tickle the ribs of the four-legged animal with a smart slap of the whip. But even so, it happened to Father Schwebius as it happened to the prophet Balaam with his donkey: she would not move from her place, "O dear Augustine, what shall I do? Get up, Gussy." But Gussy was at home in the swamp as a mouse is at home in a sack of flour. He threatened her with a hail of blows of the whip, but the animal remained unmoved disregarding the beating and kept on feeding on the tasty swamp grass! "Well, if it doesn't move, it doesn't move," Father Schwebius thought cheerfully. "Horses have their moods and whims just as people do — some on Monday, some on Tuesday, and others for a whole week, and that is not enough; it has to include Sunday as well. I can't stay here. The good people at St. Mary's are waiting for me."

Mit dem Esel von Gaul in den Pfützen Kann und will ich den Tag nicht verschwitzen!

Even with a jackass of a horse in the puddle I cannot and will not make the whole day a muddle!

With a heavy heart, the Reverend traveller descended from his seat in the carriage, sank over his knees into the mud and without shoes or cane made his way to the distant dry earth. Father Schwebius arrived at the church tired from the long walk in the wet trousers; he told his story of the horse and its caprice to the crowd waiting at the door. After Mass, a farmer hitched up his two chestnuts and in a speedy gallop arrived at the spot of the mishap. Truly, the horse was still feeding at the same spot. "Just wait, my dear girl," thought the farmer, "I'll get you out of the marsh!" He got his team into position and tried by means of a rope to pull out the block-headed animal.

Zum Tingelingeling, Du Guste, Wenn Du nicht willst, dann muszte!

With a ting-a-ling-ling, my little Gus Whether you want to or not, out you must!

But Gussy did not want to, therefore, she did not have to. The deep mud gave her a good hold on the bottom, and the two chestnut horses could not move her from her place. "What is the matter with these stupid people?" thought Gussy with her horse's brain. "Today I'm celebrating blue Monday and no one can make me do otherwise." "Oh-o, my little deaf one," growled the farmer, "I'll have to speak to you in German and read to you from the poet Lash." The verse goes:

Und treibst Du's Fressen gar zu toll, Dann hau' ich Dir die Jacke voll!

If you are going to feed as if you're mad, Then I'll beat your hide 'till enough you've had!

One well-aimed whip lash across the ears brought Gussy to here senses. Firstly, that she got Sunday and Monday interchanged. Sunday always is Father's 'busy day'. And secondly, and more importantly, Gussy, since she is the missionary's horse, should always be the shining example for all other horses in the area of obedience and self-control of gluttony. But Gussy was no stupid horse. As soon as she understood this lecture, she came straight-a-way out of the water onto dry ground. This little story was told by the farmer with the two chestnut horses.

ST. CHARLES PARISH OF REVENUE

St. Karl Baromeus was chosen as patron saint of the Revenue parish in pious memory of the first institute of the German Oblates, St. Charles at Balkenberg, Holland. The institute is considered to be the motherhouse of the German province. St. Karl Junior College was the origin of the German Oblates. St. Charles parish has the distinction of being the first parish in St. Joseph's Colony located on the west side of Tramping Lake. On June 27, 1905, Father Laufer, O.M.I. arrived from Battleford as if he were a second Moses visiting the first settlers in the promised land of St. Joseph's Colony. In order to preserve the identity of the first pioneers on the west side, their names are recorded here in these pages. Two of the settlers were married: Raphael Ell and Andrew Schan. The rest of the group in the caravan were single men: Benedict Ell (son of Raphael Ell), Martel Schmidt, Martin Weber, John Volk, Valentine Brossart. On June 29, the feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul, Holy Mass was celebrated for the first time on the western side of St. Joseph's Colony. For emergency shelter, Father Laufer had brought with him a small tent, and it was in this tent that Our Blessed Lord came to earth to the small group blessing the families, who in the

days ahead hoped to establish themselves in their new homes on the fertile prairies. The small tent could not hold the whole assembly, so they knelt in adoration on the grass steppes of the green prairie. A beautiful day favoured the important feast. The location where the first Mass on the west side took place was Father Laufer's old homestead, N.W.1/4 Sec. 32, Twp. 37, Rge. 21. On the next day, the weather changed quickly and it rained so heavily that Father Laufer could not return to Battleford; he necessarily had to remain with the settlers for two more days. On July 1 then the missionary was able to be on his way to Battleford. The original settlers generally used tents as their first shelter and home. They immediately began the construction of the sod houses, the method of building which has been described under the previous heading of "Beginnings of the Colonists." On the second Sunday in July, Father Laufer was back again among his flock of sheep on the prairie. He observed that some progress had been made in building of sod homes. After Mass a meeting was held. The discussion by the group led to the agreement that a modest house be built for the priest on his homestead. The building was to serve the dual purpose of home for the missionary, and a chapel. And soon the wagons were heading for Battleford to transport the necessary lumber.

The home for the priest was completed by the settlers in a few days. This rectory and chapel combination was suitable considering the circumstances at the time. It was a modest structure with the outside only constructed of lumber. The measurements were 28 feet long and 16 feet wide. The growth of the colony on the west side in the year 1905 was insignificant. The total number of families was only eight. Since there were larger parishes who required the services of a missionary, Father Laufer during the rest of 1905 and the spring of 1906 also served Balgonie, and in addition also made other mission trips. Following Father Laufer was Father Schweers, O.M.I., who extended his parish work on the east side to the west side of the colony and gladdened the Catholics there with the celebration of Mass on occasional Sundays. For the other Sundays, the settlers on the west side travelled to the east side to fulfill their Sunday obligation. The distance was at least 20 miles. The road led through the steep valley of Tramping Lake, a



The first church and rectory

difficult undertaking, which made for slow travel and required continuous watchfulness for safety. In order to save a long detour around the north end of the lake for Father Schweers, it was arranged that when the priest was going to hold Mass on the west side that one day in advance a boat would meet him at a given spot.

The winter of 1905 - 06 was near and it was the first winter for the pioneers in the new land. With anxious hearts and in poverty they prepared for the cold winter. The first winter was to be a real test of endurance. Two families on the west side, where the need and misery was the greatest, had to depend on the good will of the others for food and firewood. One of the first settlers remarked. "The winter of 1905 - 06 was a constant fast for us." Particularly noteworthy was the continual support of the Mounted Police. Not only did they cover the territory to find out the needs of the settlers, but they supplied food and firewood for those in dire need. But the "test winter" had to come to an end. In the spring of 1906, Father Laufer returned to St. Joseph's Colony where Father Schweers had in the meantime carried out his duties so faithfully. The colonists welcomed Father Laufer like a second St. Nicholas, Like a good father who cares for his children, Father Laufer had secured sizeable donations which made it possible for him to purchase a good supply of potatoes in Battleford. The welcome gifts were divided among the settlers according to their individual circumstances. There was a second happy surprise for the settlers. Again due to the efforts of Father Laufer, each child received a new outfit of clothing. The first two Oblate priests in St. Joseph's Colony carried out their tasks in the spirit of the Apostles; the one priest shared with the settlers the poverty, the cold and misery, starved and suffered through the winter with them; the other brought to the settlers the example of Christian humility and relieved their poverty with charity and alms. In the cradle of the beginning of the colony Christian self-sacrifice and real neighbourly charity, the priests were the godparents. There was no doubt then that God's blessing would descend on the new settlement.

In the organization of parish areas, a different division was made. Father Laufer assumed duties in the parishes on the east side and Father Schweers on the west side. The year 1906 saw a significant increase in the number of immigrants. The frame house on Father Laufer's homestead became far too small for a church. Therefore, a new structure was planned. Since there were as yet not enough supporters, and the cost of lumber being too high, and since there were no stone masons to build out of field stone, Father Schweers suggested a new procedure. The experiment was to try to build a church out of sun-dried clav bricks. A form to mold the clay was quickly manufactured. Every member of the parish took on the duty, as soon as his turn came, to make a goodly number of bricks. Father Schweers himself laboured diligently by accepting more than his share of the work and also by helping the farmers who, because of too much work at home, could not have fulfilled their pledge to help in the making of the bricks. Mental and physical work were the order of the day in the life of a missionary. But often physical labour occupied most of the time, especially in the very early years. The new church was built on Father Laufer's homestead near the old frame building. The first death in the settlement was a child of John Volk. The body was buried at the church site.

The old building now became Father Schweers' home. The question arose: How could the priest survive in such a meagre building of single ply boards which provided hardly any shelter from the harsh weather especially during the terrible winter months; how could he get food from among these poverty-stricken settlers? A settler who was well acquainted with the state of affairs and knew the situation well said that the farmers usually brought Father Schweers some bread, eggs, meat and potatoes and Father prepared the food for the table himself. Often when he

was gone on his mission migrations, the food would freeze solid as a rock. When he returned from his visits tired and hungry, the priest would first have to unharness the horse and put it into the stable. Then he had to start a fire and since there was a shortage of wood, he sometimes had to use cow dung gathered from the prairie. The frozen meal had to be placed on the stove and thawed out. However, Father Schweers had a good neighbour in the person of Raphael Ell and often he took the main meal there.

The frightening winter of 1907 - 08 made life in the poor homes extremely uncomfortable. Hunger and Cold were frequent guests of the missionary in his snow-covered shelter. The distinguished guardians of the settlers, the Mounted Police, arrived at the priest's house just in time that winter or else he may have been in serious trouble. The choice of food that the Mounted Police brought was obviously not very great! Father Schweers sometimes jokingly recalls that winter and says that never in his life had he eaten so many pancakes. It was pancakes for breakfast, pancakes for dinner, pancakes for supper, every day, weeks at a time; it was one long 'pancake winter'. One day the shortage of fuel became so acute that Father Schweers had to use the chairs for fire wood to keep from freezing.

The settlers were able to contribute very little money and so Father Schweers was the poorest amongst the poor, yet was able to give support to the very needy families. Finally, in 1907, the brick church was completed and in July was blessed to the great joy of the settlers. It was no work of art, certainly not, but at least it wasn't a dual purpose building housing both church and rectory; it was a church, the first for St. Charles parish, a building for the sole purpose of church services. Shortly after the consecration of the church, the angel of death came to the parish and took its first offering from among the adults — Mrs. Barbara Destein (nee Froehlich) R.I.P.

The history of a colony can be compared to the life story of a person; there are times of joy and sorrow both. The Most Reverend Bishop Pascal, O.M.I. arrived in the colony for the first time in August, and was met at the border of the colony by a long festive cavalcade of riders.

At that time St. Charles parish settlement was called Selz. It was customary to choose a name for a new settle-

ment by a kind of public auction. All the settlers of the parish came from South Russia and the majority of them were born in the villages of Selz and Elsass. At the auction, Th. Usselman outbid all the other contenders, and therefore the new settlement was named Selz after his home village in Russia. When one thinks back, it was a great pity that the name was changed by the C.P.R. officials. It was changed to the foolish word Revenue.

In the year 1907, we meet Father Brabender, O.M.I. for the first time and of whom we shall hear much more later about his work in the colony. Father Brabender prepared the children of Selz for their first Holy Communion which took place in the same year in a great celebration. Father Brabender, however, did not stay long in the parish of Selz. He was called by his superiors to labour in other fields.

A mighty influx of immigrants took place in the years 1906, 1907 and 1908. They extended settlement to the western boundaries of the colony and overflowed across the border into Alberta; even today there are a considerable number of Catholic immigrants settled there. The sudden growth of settlers required the organization of many parishes in the far West, and greatly increased the load of the missionaries. In order to be more centrally located to the parishes. Father Schweers transferred his residence from the St. Charles parish at Selz to Tramping Lake (1907) where the parish there had prepared a spacious parsonage. He attended to the needs of St. Charles Parish from the new location for several more years. In 1910, Father Guth, O.M.I. took over the administration of St. Michael's in Tramping Lake and the southwest missions. Father Schweers chose Scott as his residence and had St. Charles as his main mission parish. After he had built a church and rectory in Scott and had laboured devotedly in his parishes, he was transferred to Allan by his superiors in 1913. He bid farewell to the full life he lived in St. Joseph's Colony.

Father Schwebius followed Father Schweers at St. Charles Parish in October 1913. In addition to Revenue and Scott, he was given the responsibility of administering several parishes to the south including Kerrobert, Ermine and some along the railway line from Kerrobert to Herschel.

The parishes were so scattered that the proper care of them was a real test of his capacity for work, and it is no wonder that Father Schwebius was continually on the road with his one-horse buggy. Only those who know the extremes of the winters in Western Canada will understand what a life of sacrifice had to be endured. The Catholic parishioners who settled along the railway line from Kerrobert to Herschel asked Father Schwebius to take their request for a priest to the authorities. The request was granted. Therefore, after nine months in the St. Charles Parish. Father Schwebius said farewell and took up his residence in Kerrobert as their first parish priest and to serve the new area more adequately. Father Forner, O.M.I. subsequently took charge of the parish in 1914. Father Forner, as Father Schwebius and Father Schweers, was a pioneer priest in St. Joseph's Colony. Through arrangements made with his superiors, he had been visiting in Europe and had returned to Canada just before the outbreak of the World War. The changes in the parish during his absence were significant. The railway was built as was a station. A town would be built in the precincts of the parish. Noteworthy, too, was the exceptional growth in the number of families, so much so, that the old church built of sun-dried bricks had for some time already become too small to hold all the faithful. The building of a new church therefore was a matter of some urgency. To the credit of the parishioners of St. Charles, it must be noted that the choice of church site in moving it from the country to the town was a wise one. To



The home of Frank Zerr where Father Schweers said the first Mass at Revenue.

secure land for a cemetery took considerable negotiating with the C.P.R. The parish really hoped to get a level property directly west of the church for this purpose, but the C.P.R. would not agree. The only choice left was a hilly piece of land, located in a northwesterly direction. The decision was made to build a new church. But that would cost money. There is no better test of the strength of the faith in a parish than the attitude taken in paying for a church. In the fall of 1917 Father Forner, along with several parishioners, began a canvass of the parish to solicit money for the building fund. The collection was successful beyond all expectations. Within three or four days, the amount of \$3,500 was collected. In the following year of 1918, the canvass was repeated and a further \$4,000 was put into the fund. The next year another \$3,500 was added. In the short period of three years, the parishioners of St. Charles at Revenue were able to raise \$10,000 in ready cash. The number of families was about 80. It was indeed an overwhelming sign of their generosity. The supervision of construction of the new church was under the expert guidance of Mr. Frank Schroffel, a German architect from Edmonton; he had drawn up the plans, and as architect, completed the church in excellent fashion. The actual work began on June 7, 1918 and by the middle of August, the framework was up and roof on. The dimensions of the church are 96 feet long and 40 feet wide.



The clay brick church covered with boards

Regretfully, Father Forner required some medical attention concerning his trouble with varicose veins. He went to a hospital in Edmonton and in his absence Father Meyer, O.M.I. looked after the parish; he was an eyewitness as the structure rose into the sky. Also, it remained to Father

Meyer to extend the praise and thanks to Mr. Schroffel. the creator and supervisor of the building project. After an absence of six weeks. Father Forner returned to Revenue. but he was walking on crutches. On August 15, 1918, at a gathering of all the parishioners, the new House of God was christened by Father Forner and Father Krist. Referring to his tenure in St. Charles parish, Father Forner remarks in retrospect, "When I look back on the whole extent of labour involved and the many monetary contributions required. I have to acknowledge that the vast majority of the parishioners had done their duty well; that there was united zeal and generosity to attain the goal of a church building. The years I spent in the parish, as well as in all parts of the district, were filled with happy labours. To be entrusted with so many parishes: Revenue, Scott, Rutland, Artland, Unity, Wilkie, as well as the short stay at St. Michael's in Tramping Lake after the death of Father Guth, gave me plenty of opportunity to travel. But I look on my pastoral stay in Revenue as very happy, and I wish all parishioners of St. Charles Parish in Revenue the blessing and grace of God."

On August 23, 1921, Father Forner left Revenue, to accept a larger responsibility of caring for no less than 13 parishes of Ruthenian and Polish Catholics. Father Nelz, O.M.I. became the next shepherd of the parish. There were about 80 families at this time. When he left five years later, the number had grown to 105 families with a total of 700 souls. In the summer of 1926, with the help of Father's artistic abilities, the alterations of the interior of the church were undertaken. Many changes were made; the choir loft was lengthened, new pews installed, the walls and ceiling were redone, in fact, the interior was completely renovated. Visitors were impressed. The generosity of the parishioners again was a shining example of unity. The total cost was several thousand dollars and was paid for within a year. When Father Nelz completed his work at the church (he often worked with hammer and paint brush) he left the parish to the disappointment of the many parishioners. Personally, he would have wished to work in this parish for many more years, but the Church Officials named him Superior in the Prelate district and so in August 1926, he said farewell to St. Charles Parish.

The first resident priest was Father Rosenthal, O.M.I. He arrived in August, 1926 being accompanied by Father Brabender from Scott. To celebrate the occasion of receiving their own parish priest, the day being a Friday, was declared a holiday with the feast beginning with Holy Mass.



Rectory and church

Father Rosenthal had served as army chaplain in the World War on both eastern and western fronts with distinguished services to both church and country. He was a gifted preacher with extraordinary endurance and energy in the achievements of his goals. As a result, his efforts in the new area of parish work were enthusiastic. His first living quarters were in the sacristy. On the following Sunday, a meeting was held and the decision made to build a rectory. The very next day wagons were hauling sand and rocks. The building was completed in the middle of winter and the priest moved into the house at the beginning of January 1927. The building of the new rectory was a preliminary necessity in the achievement of their main objective - securing Sisters as teachers in the schools. In his efforts to attain this goal, Father Rosenthal experienced considerable and serious opposition. But the majority of the parishioners stood steadfast with the priest in their aim of getting the Sisters. In 1927, to the great joy of parents and children, the Sisters of Our Lady took up their duties as teachers in the two-room school. The living quarters of the Sisters were poor and wanting, but the good they did in the training of the children was extremely great. On April 9, 1928, Easter Monday, the parish met once again to discuss an important matter.



The hall

This time the question was the construction of a suitable parish hall. With a solid majority vote, the assembly of people accepted the plan that was presented. During that same summer of 1928, a splendid hall was built, which was the largest and most beautiful in all of St. Joseph's Colony. The blessing of the hall took place on November 4. 1928 which was the feast day of the parish patron saint. Present were Father Grötschel, Father Schulte, Father Kierdorf, Father Hermandung, Father Bieler, Father Boening. Father Rosenthal's achievements were numerous and great. After Christmas, 1929, he left the parish stating during his farewell, "Revenue today is a relatively well-to-do parish with a beautiful church, hall, rectory and Sisters in the school; the great generosity of the people in such a short period of time will surely be rewarded a thousand fold." He was thankful that so many of his goals were attained. Thanks to the enterprising spirit of the priest and the people, the parish of Revenue both materially and spiritually was well ordered; considering the circumstances and the number of families, it was a model parish.

The first settlers of St. Charles parish at Revenue were: Frank Zerr, Martin Weber, Valentine Brossart, Thadäus Usselmann, Sr. and Jr., Anton Usselmann, Friedrich Volk, John Volk, Joachim Gerein, Casimir Weber, Kaspar Elder, Bartolomäus Schmidt, Peter Garnier.

ST. MICHAEL'S PARISH — TRAMPING LAKE

The official geographical designation of the area in which St. Joseph's Colony is located is the Tramping Lake District. The lake is nearly at the center of the district. It can therefore be considered that St. Michael's Parish at Tramping Lake is the center of St. Joseph's Colony. The first settlers who settled near the locality of the present town arrived in 1906. A small group of land seekers had thoroughly investigated the area the year before with the prospect of settlement. They were: Anton Gutenberg, George Reiter, John Jahner, as well as three other men men who did not settle there. On June 12, 1905, the above mentioned men walked from Battleford (about 75 miles in a northeasterly direction from Tramping Lake) in the troublesome search for good land. They were well satisfied with the soil they found. They returned to Battleford and registered their homesteads with the authorities. They received prompt service and satisfaction. Very happy with their success, the men returned to their families in the United States.

Settlement followed in 1906 when the settlers arrived in the promised land - Canada. After a tiring and difficult railway trip, the company of people arrived at Battleford on the 4th of May. They rested only briefly at the stopover. The necessary farm implements and household goods were soon loaded on the ox carts and with some misgivings they headed for their new homes. Eight days later they arrived - without incident. Rain mixed with snow greeted them. The earth was more like a watery marsh, but the bad weather was not able to dampen their gay spirits on the arrival at their new home. There was not time, however, for lengthy joviality. Some kind of shelter had to be found. With renewed energy and vigour they attacked the job. In a few days, the sod huts were completely finished. They were not very roomy with modern accommodations, but yet they were home, a real home. The building of barns and fences was quickly undertaken. They were difficult

weeks filled with hard work, adjusting to the vagaries of the strange new land.

Physical needs were satisfied first. But what was the situation like concerning religion? The needs here were not so easily satisfied — no priest, no church far and wide. It was an intolerable situation for these firm believers. Great joy! Before the passing of many weeks, Father Laufer, O.M.I. appeared on the horizon. He had heard about the new settlers at his home in a tent north of Revenue. It was on Pentecost Sunday that Mass was first celebrated



The first church

with the new arrivals. For them it was a real feast day filled with thanksgiving and great confidence in the future. Luckily, they had a priest, but the church was missing. Yes, a church was required, no matter how small or poor it would be. Everyone was in favour of a building. Father Laufer gave his approv-

al and even donated the first few dollars to begin. They chose a spot on the N.E.¼ Sec. 28, Twp. 36, Rge. 21. Jacob Reiter gladly donated a part of his homestead for this purpose. It was a miserably poor church on the bare prairie not unlike the stable at Bethlehem. The work began in July and ended in September with the building complete. It was blessed on the feast of St. Michael. Fathers Schweers and Brabender assisted in the consecration and celebrated the first Mass.

Father Laufer was transferred by his superiors to the east side of Tramping Lake and, therefore, had to leave his beloved field of labour. Father Schweers took his place. His first Mass was celebrated on August 15 on the Feast of the Assumption in the home of Anton Halter. After Mass there was a procession with the Blessed Sacrament through the fields with singing and praying. The faithful followed in adoration and deep worship of their God. The first Corpus Christi procession in this district in the wide, Canadian

prairie, was a drama which the participants remember with inner warmth to this very day.

Father Schweers took up his residence in the hut of Father Laufer located north of Revenue. From this point he cared for the widely scattered settlements. His mission field stretched to Provost, Alberta. There were as yet no official church designations made for all the new settlements, so, they were named after the various farm owners: St. Francis Parish was called Ulrich's district; St. Henry was called the Leibel district: Grosswerder was called the Schachtel Parish. The settlements were usually far apart and the distance between them made regular visits by the missionary a difficult expectation. Automobiles would not be common for another twenty-five years. The missionary's transportation to the new communities in summer was in a light wagon, called a buggy, and in the winter months a sleigh. No one had a lordly coach and uniformed servants at this time. The priest was the coachman and servant in one person, the trips were slow, painful journeys. Who could count the long, anxious hours; who knew the many renunciations and resignations the priest suffered on the wide roadless prairie? Everyone always was on the look-out for his horse, the good and faithful 'Charlie' which usually had the duty of transporting the missionary. And who didn't know Charlie? And is it not fitting that Charlie's service of those many years should be remembered in these pages?

As a rule the mission journeys usually were made without incident. But not always. Often one would make a mistake in direction of the destination; often bad weather would play havoc with the missionary.

One day, for example, Father Schweers left by sleigh to travel from Selz to Tramping Lake. It was the middle of January. The weather was extremely cold, but duty called and there was no time to think it over. The wind was blowing icily out of the northwest. It was absolutely miserable. But he left anyway, faithful Charlie stepping lively through the deep snow. The wind blew more strongly with every passing minute and soon was blowing large snowflakes through the air. One could feel instinctively that a full scale snow storm was in the making. The dreaded storm was soon a reality. The wind blew ever more furiously,

whipping the loose snow like drifting sand into high banks for the traveller to cross. One has to experience a Canadian blizzard in order to fully comprehend the force of its terror. In a trice, the solitary traveller would be lost in the deep frozen snowbanks. The horrible elements would penetrate his very being so that he could not see or hear. Although fur coats and blankets provided good protection, they too were not enough sometimes. A lone traveller could easily lose his life in such a storm. The horse, Charlie, was beginning to pant and gasp, but not for long. Suddenly he stood still. They had fallen into a deep snow. The horse was buried up to its chest. There was no possibility for it to take one step. What was to be done? To stay in the snow meant certain death. Better to keep moving. Very unwillingly, Father Schweers came out from under the blankets, got out of the sleigh and stepped into the snow up to his hips. He reached Charlie and with stiff fingers removed the harness. He tried to get on his back and ride through the deep snow, but he was mistaken in his plan. Charlie just was not a riding horse; his broad back had never carried a rider. In spite of encouraging words, Charlie was entirely unco-operative. At each attempt to get on his back, the animal drew back with menacing gestures so that the idea of riding him had to be given up. How was he to get out of this predicament? Are the angels not caring? Must the priest die in the snow and cold? Such thoughts cut him to the quick, yet he did not give up the hope of being rescued from the dire circumstances. "When the need is greatest, God is nearest." The weather cleared somewhat and visibility improved considerably. Luckily, he noticed a house near by. Thank God! Rescue is at hand! It did not take long for the men to arrive for they too had experienced such emergencies and knew that speedy help was required. They were Phillip Weber and Peter Volk. Their concerted efforts soon had the man and the horse out of their cold surroundings and transferred to safety. Before nightfall, Father Schweers was able to reach the settlement of Anton Gutenberg where he spent a friendly evening near a warm fire, and the misadventure was soon forgotten.

Father Schweers' living quarters on Father Laufer's homestead near Revenue was in a critical state of repair.

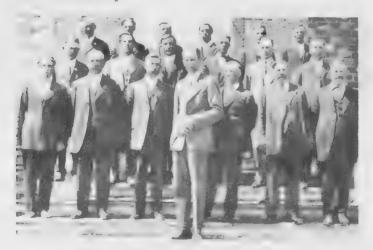


Rectory and present church

It provided little protection against the extremes of the weather. To live in the run-down house would be suicidal. Some new arrangements had to be made quickly. The location of the house was too far from the center of the settlements, for many settlements lay to the south. A new dwelling at a more central location seemed imminent. It did not take long for the missionary and the people to agree on the decision to build. In a short time a respectable rectory was erected on the Tramping Lake church site. It served not only as rectory, but subsequently also as a stopover for missionaries who were passing through.

In 1909. Father Schweers was transferred from St. Michael's Parish, where he had spent five difficult but very blessed years. He went to Scott where he worked with the same zeal until 1913. His follower in Tramping Lake was Father Guth, O.M.I. who was appointed in April 1910. St. Michael's Parish was steadily increasing in numbers. Actually there were sixty-two families and twenty-eight self-supporting single men. The old sod church could not serve the needs of such a number, and some thought had to be given to the building of a new church. The priest and the people reached agreement very quickly and within two months of the arival of Father Guth, the parish began construction. The sod turning took place in June and in the fall of the same year, the building was completed. In 1928 this frame church was torn down and most of the material sold by auction.

The mission territory under Father Guth's jurisdiction included St. Michael's Parish and those parishes which lay in a southwesterly direction from Tramping Lake, such as, Ermine, St. Francis Parish, as well as scattered groups of settlers. An event of far-reaching consequences occurred in 1910 when the projected railway from Wilkie to Kerrobert was begun and the first train arrived in Tramping Lake in the spring of 1913. The railway increased the traffic and improved commerce tremendously. The first place of business which opened its doors to the public was the firm of Febr. Baumann who sold machinery and farm implements. As well, there was an agency which sold houses, farms, lots, etc. The first general store was opened by Schill and Evans in June 1913. Evans soon sold his share and Mr. Jos. Schill became the sole owner of the business which operates to this day.



Men's choir - Mr. Wahl, director

In spite of the increased demands in the rapid development in this part of the colony, Father Guth did not weaken in the least in his ardour. In summer or winter, in sunshine or rain he was always cheerfully dedicated to his work of healing the souls who were committed to his care, those in the mother parish as well as those to the south. Alas, his spiritual labours were suddenly ended in the fall of 1919 when he took seriously ill, spent a few weeks in a hospital in Edmonton and there breathed his last breath.

Father Guth's early demise was a grievous loss to the young colony. His memory lives in the hearts and prayers of his fellow priests and the faithful. The unexpected departure of a man in the prime of his years as a priest, left a serious gap in the ranks of the clerics of St. Joseph's Colony. In addition the raging 1914-18 World War wrought its disastrous effects on the mission territories, especially the German-speaking districts. To get replacements from Europe, from where all the Oblate priests came, was out of the question. During this time of necessity and a shortage of German priests, St. Michael's was administered by Father Forner of Scott. Willingly, he complied with the directions of his spiritual authorities, accepting the extra duties and the heavy load of work.



Catholic Convention in Tramping Lake, 1927

The Oblate priest humbly accepted the situation and from 1919 to 1921 was the administrator of the parish in which three previous priests had laboured so successfully.

Finally, in the year 1921, the acute situation ended. On July 1, 1921, Father Krist arrived as local pastor in St. Michael's Parish. The circumstances within the parish had changed and progressed so much that the building of a new church became an utmost necessity. The present church was one and one-half miles out of town which was becoming an important center. The church in the country had been too small for some time now to hold all the parishioners. The number of families in a short time rose from sixty to over a hundred and was still growing. Moreover, God's blessings were abundantly showered on the work of the farmers for the crops were generally good. There never was any want of generosity among the parishioners when it came to God's Church. It was resolved, therefore, to

erect a splendid church which for the present and the future generations would be a sign of the deep religious convictions of the parish. It is built in a pure Roman style of architecture. The measurements are: length, 126 feet; width, 50 feet and a full basement. The church in Tramping Lake is the largest church in St. Joseph's Colony, and the first and only to the present time that was built out of bricks. The building costs of such an enterprise were computed in quite a different set of figures than were the costs of a frame building. The estimates were about \$40,000 for the church, and \$5,000 for a new rectory built out of lumber.



First Mass of Father Dietrich

Father Guth, Father Schwebius, Father Krist, Father Dietrich, Father Schweers, Father Bieler.



Father Hermandung and First Communicants

The construction began on June 15, 1922 and on the Feast of Christmas of the same year, Father Krist with great pride celebrated the Mystery of the Mass in the new church. The significance of such a splendid work became obvious when one considers that the number of families, although over a hundred, were relatively poor, and further that all the surrounding churches, whether in town or country, were of frame construction. A structure of bricks was an exceptional undertaking. The building was admired by visitors from far and near. A Protestant railway official who travelled on the train through Tramping Lake in 1923, on seeing the church, made the striking observation, "That is a building the whole community can be proud of. It is a distinct witness to the solid confidence in the farm life and the devout character of the people. Such a visible testimonial is of greater importance and effect on the neighbourhood than several articles or lengthy notice in the newspaper." The man was entirely correct in his assessment of the achievements. And what made the completion of such massive undertaking possible? On the part of the priest, it was the understanding consideration of a necessary expedient and a comprehension of the development of the parish; on the part of the parish — the outstanding charity of the people. Both the shepherd and the flock had unlimited trust in assistance from above.



Mr. and Mrs. Anton Gutenberg 1906 pioneers

Of great concern to Father Krist was the spiritual state of the parish and in this respect he directed his greatest efforts. Particularly was he dedicated to the education of the young people who were growing up. His greatest wish in this regard was the acquisition of Sisters, and in this he was finally successful.

In January 1924, the first Ursuline Sisters from

Prelate came to Tramping Lake to take charge of the

school. Their aim from the beginning was to be of service to both adults and the youth of the parish. Their work as teachers was highly praised by everyone. St. Michael's Parish was the first in the colony to employ the services of teaching Sisters.

On July 1, 1926, Father Krist was required by his superior to transfer to a parish in Happyland district in the southern part of the province. The parish was sorry to see him leave and they sent with him their good wishes for well-being in his new and distant endeavors.

His successor was Father L. Hermandung, O.M.I. who had been at Lemberg, Saskatchewan for the past five years. Previously, Father Hermandung served as missionary in the former German colony in Southwest Africa; there he laboured in some of the most difficult outposts and gained plenty of practical experience in keeping peace among settlers. This knowledge was valuable in his new post. Under his guidance, the parish life boomed forth. Various societies were activated. The local chapter of the Catholic Men's Society, as well as the Altar Society, were developed both as to numbers of members and projects undertaken. In 1927 the interior of the church was completed and the debt which was as yet considerable, was significantly decreased. To St. Michael's Parish of Tramping Lake, which has made such tremendous progress with the leadership of efficient missionaries, goes the wish for success and an abundance of God's blessings.

The names of the immigrants who settled in St. Michael's Parish in the founding year of 1906 were: Joh. Lang, Frank Hoffart, Peter Bertsch, Sebastian Bohn, Andrew Burghardt, John Eckert, Michael Fetsch, Alphonse Froehlich, Joseph Ganie, John Ganie, Anton Gutenberg, Engelbert Halter, Anton Halter, Philip Heit, Ignatz Heit, Lambert Heit, Philip Hummel, John Jahner, George Jochim, Philip Kraft, Rochus Kraft, Felix Lang, John Lang, Anton Lang, Marianna Laturnus, Anton Lauinger, Lorenz Maier, Katherina Maier (widow), Joseph Reiter, George Reiter, Jacob Sali, Peter Schneider, Wendelin Schwab, Andrew Schwab, Philip Senger, Cyrillus Simon, Benedict Simon, Michael Sitter, Carl Tuchscherer, Peter Volk, Jos. Wagner, Philip Weber, Ludwig Weber, Stephan Warren, Paul Zahn, John Zahn, Frank Ziegler.

BROADACRES

St. Michael's Parish expanded greatly both in area and in the number of families during the last few years. The total was over 170 families. The southern boundary abuted with the northern edge of Kerrobert about twelve miles distant. A suggestion of sub-dividing the parish had been considered for some time in the interest of better service. Some thirty families in the vicinity of Broadacres, with the permission of Father Krist, requested the bishop to authorize the building of a church in Broadacres. In July 1924, the request was accepted. The people organized a drive for building funds. But the poor crops of the past few years slowed down the donations to a trickle. So the long-awaited church of their own was not to be until 1928 when Father Hermandung was the pastor. The construction began in July and in December the framework of the building was completed. On December 28, 1928, the parishioners had the satisfaction of attending Holy Mass in the new church. The church, thus far only partially finished, was located on a 14-acre site which was directly south of the village. The size of the church was 34 by 58 feet. A word of appreciation must be expressed to the good people of the new parish for their generosity and their co-operation in the construction of a modest church.

The first German settlers in the district of Broadacres were as follows: 1908 — Mathias Dietrich and Andrew Schollin; 1910 — Jacob Brotzel, Joseph Schell, Sr., Vincent Borschneck, Bernhard Reiter, Joseph Welter.

DENZIL

In the distinguished booklet, *The Germans in Canada*, by Father J. Pietsch, O.M.I., we find the following noteworthy passage, "In some instances it was subsequently seen that the building of a church, rectory and school had been too hastily undertaken. New railways were being built

and railway stations constructed, and the railway companies took little notice of the local establishments that were in the area. Around the newly constructed station there soon



Church and rectory

grew a village with merchants and tradesmen; a doctor perhaps settled there, a post office was erected, elevators were built next to the track, banks and hotels established. The town became the place of business and there the church and the priest should be located." When the country and the village communities were in such close proximity and the question arose of where to build one church for all. the obvious choice was the town in preference for the country. Town communities usually grow very rapidly as compared to country communities which reach a peak of development in about ten years and remain there. When the railway from Macklin to Kerrobert was constructed, St. Henry's Church was four miles from Denzil and six miles from Salvador. Incidentally, it is interesting to recall that Father Forner had explicitly warned the people of St. Henry's (then called Leibel parish) not to build the church in the country, because the route of the railway had been surveyed and in fact construction had already begun. The people who were just newly arrived from Russia did not comprehend the American way of settlement, nor realized that here the towns grew and developed much more quickly than in Europe. Also, they were accustomed to building their church approximately at the center of their settlement. Of this peculiar situation, Father Bieler, O.M.I. said that as early as 1912 the Catholics from Denzil had made representation to the bishop, but not until 1915 could the building of a church be undertaken. There were 30 families and some single self-supporters who together began a meagre building fund. Max Kasperger was the chief carpenter, and all helped as much as they were able to. Before long the largest and most beautiful church in the district was a reality. It was 50 feet by 28 feet with a spacious sanctuary and sacristy. The generosity of the faithful did not rest until the interior of the church was completed and the last penny of the debt paid. The choir from St. John's contributed its talents in the church services. Mr. Gosnick served as sacristan.

In the meantime, the people of Salvador were beginning to voice their request for a church. This sealed the fate of St. Henry's Church. One other question for resolution was the location of the rectory. Denzil was the choice. The people greeted the plan with enthusiasm and gave it their whole-hearted support. The area had expanded so much, however, that one priest could not handle it alone. To help relieve the situation, Father Götz, a newly-ordained priest was appointed as assistant. The new priest was particularly suitable for the position. He was the son of a deeply religious German family from Russia. He grew up in the Canadian West and was familiar with the ways of the people; consequently he easily adapted to his new work. Father Pietsch once said, "Every missionary has to be part architect." The young priest surprised everyone with his ability in construction. He was a mason, carpenter and handiman all rolled into one. He had a special ability in encouraging the workers with his clever wit. His joking manner made difficult work easier and refreshed the men in a new attack on the work to be done. With such a jolly personality in the midst of the labourers, and his expert guidance, it was no wonder that a spacious rectory was soon erected complete with a modern hot water heating system. The interior was equipped by the ladies' organizations of the parish. who in a spirit of thanksgiving beautifully furnished the entire rectory. The success of the whole endeavour was due to the enthuisiastic spirit of the parish, an enthusiasm that is epitomized in the words: zeal, good will, and cooperation! On New Year's Day 1923, the rectory was completely finished and quite ready for occupancy by the new



Father Schultz and weavers

shepherd of the parish, Father Schultz, O.M.I.

Not often does one observe the phenomenon of a priest being assigned to the same parish for a second time. It is a shining testimonial of Father Schultz's capabilities that his superiors named him as parish priest of Denzil, an area in which he had begun his apostleship in the West thirteen vears earlier. Much had changed since. The new pastor was

an experienced leader. The priest made an unexpected surge in development. When Father Schultz arrived in Denzil there were 80 families which now had grown to 120 and was growing steadily. Father Schultz reported that the church, which was built in 1915 by his predecessor, Father Bieler, and was the largest and most beautiful in the whole area, had now become too small. In 1928 the church was moved from the west side to the east side of the rectory in order to use the same ideal site for the new church. The new plan called for a magnificent Temple of God which would put all the other churches in the colony to shame. Because of the splendid generosity of the parishioners, there was no doubt that Sacred Heart Parish of Denzil could reach its goal. In 1929 the work was to have been begun, but a complete crop failure delayed the plan. Dejectedly, Father Schultz wrote, "The harvest of 1929 postponed our beautiful plan to sometime in the future. But God's will be done!" Crop failures are part of Providence to test man's confidence in Almighty God to provide for his spiritual good. Happily, the blessings of a good harvest will come to spur on all faithful Christians to carry out more fully the work of the Lord by returning a part of their blessings to Him from whom all good comes.

Besides his interest in the building of a new church, Father Schultz took considerable pains in the development of a home industry. The livelihood of people was entirely dependent on the production of wheat. If there should be a crop failure then there is misery in the country. In order



The loom

to forstall the times of need, the creation of another means of income with a home industry seemed necessary. Consequently, the farmer was encouraged to do some work during the winter when usually there were few opportunities to earn money and thereby profitably to lay aside a dollar or two. Father Schultz reported, "Beside the church was an old school and there we set up two looms and spinning wheels. These were brought in on a trial basis to see if the farmers would take advantage of earning some money during the winter months. I believe that things weren't bad enough yet to interest the farmers in this kind of winter work."

A home industry cannot be organized overnight; the use, or rather need, for such a business must come from the people themselves, then the venture may be assured of more success. The future of Sacred Heart Church in Denzil is apparently very promising; it shines as a gleaming jewel in the crown of parishes in St. Joseph's Colony.

ST. JOHN'S PARISH

Of all the country churches in St. Joseph's Colony, St. John's has the distinction of being moved from its original location to another church site. The first Mass in the parish was celebrated by Father Schultz on December 26, 1910. There were about 25 - 30 Catholic settlers in the area. Father Schultz reported on his first arrival in the parish on the second Christmas Day, "Mr. J. Jansen, on the appointed day came to get me from Rosary Church. He had a splendid spirited team of horses and although we were assured to cover the twelve miles in two hours, we arrived at Mr. Janzen's home after a six hour drive. In the discussion of sun, moon, stars, land and people, the driver in his carelessness lost his way in the darkness. Salt Lake was the center of the parish with the Jansen family located on the west side and on the east the Wezanei family, with whom I later lodged. The church was built on a hill beside the large lake. The exact location was S.W.1/4 Sec. 1, Twp. 39, Rge. 26. At the same time, a cemetery was measured out, in which some forty parishioners were buried during the next twelve years." Nine months after the founding of the parish, Father Schultz left. During this short time, the framework of a new church had been completed. Certainly no small accomplishment! In October 1911, Father Schultz, in obedience to his superiors, left the parish; in a memorandum he noted, "My honoured successor was Father Bieler who laboured valiantly here until 1923." Concerning his twelve-year stay, Father Bieler said the following: "When I arrived, St. John's Church was completed on the exterior only and without paint as yet. The dimensions of the church were 28 feet wide and 40 feet long. Before finishing the interior, we added a sanctuary and a sacristy. At the same time a choir loft was built. Max Kasperger, a resident in the parish, was chief carpenter. He was an expert furniture maker from Germany and as such Kasperger built a beautiful altar, a communion railing and a confessional. Also, pews, the Stations of the Cross, altar effects and the necessaries for Mass were secured, and an efficient hot-air system was installed." Soon St. John's Church was a neat, warm church of which the generous parishioners could be justly proud. The church choir was provided by the Schmidt and Lessmeister families. The preparation for church services was the duty of Mr. John Jansen. The priest always stayed at the Gottlob family. Later, when Mr. Gottlob moved to the United States, there was considerable rivalry among the parishioners about who will have the honour of providing shelter and lodging for the priest. To be assured of the love and concern of his people, is surely a great consolation to the missionary, and certainly will lighten the load of his vocation. The report closes with the words, "St. John's Parish grew to 50 families, the majority originating from the U.S.A. They were an upright and good-natured people."

On January 27, 1923, Father Schultz returned to the parish where he first began his missionary work. Much had changed in his absence. Instead of Grosswerder as the center from which the priest carried on his work, the parish was now administered from the rectory at St. Henry's



The church moving

Church which Father Bieler had recently built. And later when St. Henry's Parish centered in Salvador, the residence of the priests was shifted to Denzil where Father Götz, O.M.I., as previously mentioned, had built a modern rectory. Father Schultz relates further, "St. John's and St.

Henry's churches stood in the way of progress, therefore, St. John's was moved six miles northwest to the neighbourhood of the Jansen, Leier and Winterholt families where the first Mass was celebrated in 1910. The present church is located on the S.E.¼, Sec. 16, Twp. 39, Rge. 25. St. Henry's Church was moved to the nearby town of Salvador where it serves as a parish hall."

The growth of a Catholic population in and around the towns caused a complete reorganization of the country parishes and the re-location of churches. When one con-

siders that seemingly the devotion and the worship to God is dependent on the growth of the towns, then one has to respect the deep faith of the people who settled before the towns came. They were subject to the will of the church authorities and relocated their churches from one locality to another without too much interruption. The officials in their deliberations wisely decided on the relocation of the churches and now, even after several years, the decision is quite acceptable to the people. As Father Schultz remarked, "I do not believe that anyone would want to return to the previous arrangements."

GROSSWERDER

The first settlements in St. Joseph's Colony around Tramping Lake, spread westward, and soon a flood of immigrants covered the area for 50 to 60 miles distant creating the parishes of Grosswerder, Denzil, Macklin, St. Peter, St. Donatus, even crossed the provincial borders to form Rosenheim, Provost, Cadogan in Alberta. Practically all settlers in these parishes were from Russia and brought their customs, habits and dress to their new home. It is interesting to note what Father Schultz's first impressions were of the dress of the settlers when he arrived at Grosswerder in 1910, "Many people wore leathern cloaks with sheepskin lining, which, I discovered later, they brought with them from Russia from where they came." The first service in the parish of St. Anthony at Grosswerder was



First church and addition

performed by Father Schweers, O.M.I. in the sod house of Mr. John Kohlmann. This was on December 7, 1907. At the same time, several children were baptized. From that time onward, the small group of settlers wanted a mission station which Father Schweers could visit on a regular basis. It was necessary for the parish to choose a name. An open meeting was held to discuss the question, and a majority decision was reached.

All the settlers around Grosswerder were born in Russia. Some came from Saratov on the Volga, the rest from the Crimea in southern Russia. The result of the discussion was a dual name. The patron saint of the parish of the Saratov people (from the village of Schuck), St. Anthony, was chosen as patron of the church, and the village name of Grosswerder in southern Russia was taken to name the new settlement. In 1908 a small sod church, 32 by 16 feet, was built and on August 12, 1908, the tiny chapel was blessed by Father Schweers and Father Forner.

The modest church was a picture of dire poverty. Since there was little wood available for use as rafters, the sods for the roof were cut especially large; it was obvious from the beginning that such a roof afforded little protection against rain and wind storms. How pitiful the situation was at that time is noted in a letter that Father Palm. O.M.I., who later was parish priest at St. Anthony's, wrote to his home, "My mission, St. Anthony's Parish, was founded in 1907 and until one year later, the settlers were without a church; in their poverty they could build only in 1908 when more settlers had arrived, and even then with difficulty. The first little church was 32 by 16 feet. The building materials were cheap and ready at hand. Instead of wood, stones, etc., sods which were cut from the steppe or prairie with a plow drawn by two strong oxen, were used. Industrious hands gathered the pieces of sod, piled them one on the other and thus put up a structure which served as a church. To give the building some semblance of decent appearance, the walls were smoothed with clay and whitened with lime. The roof was of the same style; instead of the usual rafters, poplar branches were used, which were obtained from a forest some fifty kilometres distant; all construction was done without the use of a square or plumb line. For a roof fine twigs and sods; for

a floor — God's earth. A small altar with two candles and a simple cross were the total furnishings of the church. All in all the poor dwelling was truly a picture of the stable at Bethlehem."

The condition of the church was indeed wretched. The holy water font at the entrance of the church was a tin can which once contained syrup or lard. The holy water sprinkler was made of a long, dry bunch of grass tied into a bundle with twine. The crucifix on the altar was a curiosity: the base was the base of a family crucifix which Mr. J. Schachtel had brought with him from Russia as a family remembrance. On this base a simple wooden cross was attached with a leaden corpus of Christ. The pictures consisted of two gaily-coloured prints (Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary) which were purchased very cheaply.

The people took up a collection of free-will offerings to try to obtain at least one ornament for the church, and inspite of the poverty and need, the collection was so successful that they could purchase a beautiful statue of Mary which is in the parish church even today yet. From the old settlers' description of the first sod church we know that the roof especially was flimsy and unsafe. The rain trickled in and the wind whirled and swirled the snow through the cracks. It was a wonder that the miserable structure didn't collapse after the first few weeks.

The successor to Father Schweers was Father Forner. O.M.I. who had the administration of Grosswerder and all of the mission stations to the west. The first mission trip that Father Forner took in the district was on December 3, 1908 when he left Tramping Lake with a sleigh and a horse to travel to Grosswerder. And from there to Rosenheim, Cadogan in Alberta and then to the so-called Leibel Parish, St. Henry's near Denzil. Besides this, Father Forner undertook the care of the Ulrich Parish, today St. Francis Parish, near Luseland, where in the same year of 1908. Father Schweers had a frame church built. The area comprised five parishes which were scattered across an area of at least sixty miles. There was no railway in existence in this part of the colony as yet. All travelling that Father Forner did was with his horse. In summer it was tolerable. but in winter the life of a missionary was a life of sacrifice in the true sense of the word, since travel across the snowcovered prairies with its sudden storms was truly a treacherous venture.

The earthern church at Grosswerder had fallen into such ruin that Father Forner had to close it until repairs could be made. Concerning this event, the people coined a witty phrase, "It took two priests to bless the church but only one to close it."

On June 30, 1909, Father Palm arrived in the western missions from Battleford. Father Palm, O.M.I., a new arrival at Prince Albert Diocese from Germany, accompanied Bishop Pascal on his Confirmation visits and as such gained a rich knowledge of mission ways and thus was better able to adapt to it. The young priest was sent as assistant to Father Forner in his work. They divided the territory between them. Father Forner took the mission stations in Alberta and Father Palm took the Saskatchewan parishes of Grosswerder, the Leibel (St. Henry) and Ulrich (St. Francis) parishes. On his arrival at Grosswerder Father Palm found a sod church but no living quarters for the priest. He, therefore, had to seek quarters at various farmers' homes and was thankful for any Christian kindness offered to him. For six months Father Palm lived the life of a beggar, going from house to house soliciting a meal and shelter.

In the meantime, the parish built a frame rectory and in December, 1908, Father Palm had the pleasure of ending his wandering and moved into his own home. To this day, the new rectory is located on the same site that the old rectory was built.

In the history of the parish it is noted that the solemn First Communion took place in November, 1908. The first communicants can recall even today that it was an extremely cold, wintry day, so cold that the reception of the Body of Christ gave the children a true, inner spiritual warmth, and absolutely nothing could spoil the festive spirit and great happiness of the day. Another joyful day of festive celebration occurred when the Shepherd of the Diocese, Bishop Pascal conferred the Sacrament of Confirmation for the first time in May, 1910. On this occasion older people, who did not have the opportunity in Russia to receive the sacrament, were confirmed.

The population of St. Anthony's Parish grew so quickly in such a short time that even the addition of a 20 by 14-foot area to the old sod church could not hold all the people on a Sunday. Also, the complete collapse of the building seemed imminent. Of the situation, Father Palm wrote, "Last year, 1911, we had a great deal of rain which settled the building considerably and was its ruin. There was such a large space between the roof and the walls that a person could put his arm through it. The wind would blow the snow into the church and after a storm, snow in parts of the church would be 30 to 50 centimetres deep. For the time being the whole structure was very firm because it was frozen solid in the extreme cold. But woe, when thawing weather arrives during the next few weeks. Some morning I will find the walls tumbled down and the roof resting on a few tree branches in the air. Father Palm endured the poverty year after year without a word of complaint. With his iron will, he was able to overcome all adversity. When the conditions of the settlers finally began to improve, thoughts again turned to the building of a church

With prudence, energy and untiring zeal, he carried out the project of construction. In all aspects of building, he was very attentive to details and took a lively interest; his gift of careful observation prevented possible defects or errors in carrying out the building plan. The construction of the church was started in the summer of 1912 and on the 5th of November amid indescribable jubilation and



Present church and rectory

rapture of the people, the church was blessed by Bishop Pascal. On the festive day the following priests were participants and guests: Fathers Brück, Krist, Schwebius, Bieler, Guth and Schultz. Father Palm had attained a lofty goal, a beautiful, spacious parish church, a credit to the glowing generosity of the people.

But Father Palm could not rest with just the outer shell of a building. All his efforts were now exerted to the beautification of the interior and one had to be astonished at the brief time it took to obtain pews, altars, communion railing, confessional, the accourrements for Mass, statues, the Stations of the Cross, etc., all that was suitable to the style of the church, and the good quality and craftsmanship. A most prominent achievement was the acquisition of a magnificent church bell, which was procured direct from Germany shortly before the outbreak of the World War. No parish in St. Joseph's Colony could claim equal status on such an accomplishment.

The true and melodious ring of the bell made a deep impression on the visitor when he heard it for the first time. The Reverend Benedictine Abbot Bruno Dörfler, O.S.B. of Muenster, Saskatchewan blessed the bell in a solemn ceremony on July 28, 1914. Father Bour, O.M.I. gave the commemorative sermon. The festival was honoured by the presence of Father Rudolph Palm, O.S.B., a brother of Father Palm, O.M.I., as well as the Oblate priests: Krist, Schwebius, Bieler, Schultz and Guth.

The life of Father Palm can be compared to a spring that was continuously bubbling. He was always active, always working, always venturing anew in the service of God and Church. But despite all his physical labour, Father Palm never neglected the principal charge of a missionary, the kindling and growth of God's love in the hearts of his parishioners. As soon as the church had been built and the interior completed, he turned his efforts to the honour of the patron of the parish, St. Anthony, Grosswerder by organizing a pilgrimage which was held annually on the day or within the octave of the feast of the miracle worker of Padua. The faithful from far and near were invited to the solemn occasion which was always shared by several priests. Father Palm was a true shepherd with zealous concern for the souls of mankind. In word and deed he was

a loyal friend to everyone of his parishioners. The deeply genuine religious spirit which rules supreme in St. Anthony's Parish, is visible proof of his conscientious and efficacious work. In return his parishioners respected their spiritual father and loved him dearly. No one can describe the confusion that the news of his sudden death created. He passed away on January 2, 1929 in the hospital at Macklin. The message of his demise travelled through St. Joseph's Colony like a prairie fire and in Grosswerder one farmer telephoned another reporting, "Father Palm is dead; our priest has died."

In the exercise of his vocation, he came to his end. Although he was ill, he could not bear to see his parishioners without Mass on the Feast of Christmas. After the last Mass he immediately had to go to bed, from which he was not to leave again. For twenty years Father Palm managed Grosswerder parish; for twenty years, he lived a single and solitary life on the prairie; for twenty years he shouldered distress, sacrifice, renunciation. But with all the exigencies which, so to speak, were his daily ration of his existence, he was always satisfied, and never did anyone hear a word of complaint. He fulfilled the course of his life as a true Oblate, a conscientious member of the order, a loyal shepherd and father of his sheep. Father Palm was the first priest of the new German-Polish St. Mary's Province, who passed on to eternity. When his earthly remains were carried to the grave, all the priests without exception of St. Joseph's Colony were present to pay their last respects. At least 1,500 sorrowing people along with 14 priests were in the retinue to the cemetery. There he rests not far from St. Anthony's Church which he built with so much toil and sweat, at the foot of the cross; he sleeps among his parishioners who preceded him into eternity. The unexpected death and memory of the esteemed priest was like a nightmare for the parish. It was impossible to accept the fact that the memorable priest was no longer alive. The parish consequently needed a new priest and, therefore, Father Meyer, O.M.I. was provisionally appointed. Father Meyer administered the office of bursar in the Oblate Province and thus was well qualified to discharge all legal claims of the estate, to peruse the parish books, correspondence and many other various matters which follow the death of a person. Since Father Palm had always administered the parish at a high standard, it was necessary only to carry on in the customary and orderly way. Father Meyer stated that his short stay in Grosswerder was a real pleasure.

In the summer of 1929, Father Kim, O.M.I. was appointed to St. Anthony's Parish. Prior to his new station, he worked in various parishes in the southern part of the province. Father Kim is not a newcomer in Western Canada. In fact he is one of the oldest and most experienced pioneer missionaries, completely knowledgeable of pioneer life. Father Kim was in the West before anyone had even thought of the formation of St. Joseph's Colony, and founded and built up many parishes and successfully organized them. We wish Father Kim, in his struggle in the service of God, abundant blessings in his new field of labour.

PRIMATE

Of all the place names in St. Joseph's Colony, Primate is proud to have a name with a genuine ecclesiastical ring. The word is used when referring to a prelate of the highest rank in the Church, for example, "St. Peter, Primate of the Church." The word primate is used also to designate an honourable and important position such as bishops in charge of ecclesiastical provinces which comprised whole nations sometimes. Some examples are Cologne in Germany, Gnesen in Poland, Lyon and Bordeaux in France, Toledo in Spain. But our little parish of Primate certainly does not aspire to such lofty majesty; it is satisfied, in its modesty, just to be in existence. It is more like another Bethlehem, the smallest among the princely towns in St. Joseph's Colony. Primate parish may be small but the faith of the Catholics is like fine, pure gold.

The founding, growth and development of the parish comprised a considerable part of Father Palm's lifetime. Primate, as many parishes in the western part of the Colony, had formed a close bond with Father Palm who now sleeps in peace. If one considers all the other churches

that Father Palm built as stepping stones in the service of God, then the church at Primate would be like the last effort of a fallen soldier because the building of the church at Primate was his final act on earth; it was his last project.

The first Mass in Primate was held by Father Palm in May 1916 at the home of Mr. Michael Sheedy. With the increase of the number of souls, regular monthly services were held in the town hall since the spring of 1918. The regular service was a favourable prediction, for when a missionary has regular monthly Mass in a locality, a church is built before long. And with Father Palm's restless spirit, one could be certain that in a short period of time a church would be a reality in Primate. And it was. In 1924 labourers were working diligently at the church site erecting a sturdy building. The church was mostly concrete. A basement was covered with a roof and the church



The basement of the church

was finished. It reminded one of the catacombs. The completion was left to some future date. The measurements of the church were 34 feet wide and 68 feet long, without the tower. The cost of the building amounted to \$3,000.

Father Palm, O.M.I. celebrated Mass for the first time in the new church in September, 1924. The joy of the memorable day will remain with the parishioners for a long time. The patron saint of the parish is St. Elizabeth of Thuringen, the saintly woman who was an esteemed model for married people, and a shining example of service of one's neighbour. The population of the young parish was 45 families. The numbers of non-Catholics in the area was very small, a situation which ensures religious freedom in the school and peaceful tranquility among those who are

of one mind. Under the skillful direction of Mr. W. Bens, one of the early settlers in St. Joseph's Colony, a choir was formed, a tribute to the parishioners, and a model for others, considering their small number. At the beginning, W. Bens had only inexperienced singers at his disposal, but the choir soon increased to thirty in number. Good will, a good project, and real endurance on the part of the members along with the practical aptitude and patient perseverance of the director resulted in a church choir which many parishes with hundreds of families would have been honoured to have.

The new priest, Father Kim, actively continued the work his predecessor had begun and steered development in the same direction. The parish members of Primate hopefully will always support their energetic priests and thus assure God's blessing on St. Elizabeth's Parish.

The church board of directors is composed of the following: Peter Stang, Jacob Sieben, Jacob Walliser.

The first settlers were: Joseph Stang, Michael Stang, Michael Gartner, Joseph Schroh, Michael Sheedy.

ST. PETER'S PARISH

St. Peter's Church is situated ten miles south of Macklin near Cosine Lake. The first settlers arrived at their new home with teams of oxen from Battleford in 1907.

A large influx of settlers arrived in 1908 so that a sizeable German-Catholic settlement began to take form. True children of the Church, they regularly attended Mass at the nearest church at Grosswerder and supported the church and priest as far as their means would allow. Even those who were very distant from the church at Grosswerder willingly helped in the building of the church and rectory, as much as those who had settled in St. Anthony's Parish earlier. When the number of settlers increased, Father Palm afforded them the convenience of attending Mass locally by travelling to the area and celebrating Mass in one of the larger homes thus creating the opportunity for more people to attend Mass, especially those who were unable to travel to Grosswerder. When school buildings

were erected, Mass was celebrated in one of them on an appointed Saturday.

The Catholic parishes developed quickly in Western Canada in the early years. Therefore, it was only a question of time when a church would be built in the settlement. In 1916, barely nine years since the arrival of the first settlers, the construction of a large church was begun. The church still serves the parish today. Father Palm continued to provide Sunday services and, although parish priest at Grosswerder, he cared for this parish like a faithful shepherd with true apostolic zeal until 1923.



Church and rectory

When Bishop Prud'homme visited the parish for the occasion of conferring the Sacrament of Confirmation, it was also the occasion of a new development in the growth of the parish; and it happened in a peculiar way. At the conclusion of the ceremony one of the members of the church board came out of the sacristy, bowed reverently to the bishop, and with shaking hands and stuttering words implored His Excellency to appoint a priest who will make his home in the parish. At first, the bishop was somewhat perplexed with the unexpected speech from a layman and in the middle of the church. But he understood the genuine

Christian character and the deep convictions of the Russo-German. Obviously, moved by the sincerity of the man, the bishop gave his consent to the request. Before long, builders and carpenters were busy constructing a rectory near the church. Father Meyer, who was no stranger to the people since he often helped Father Palm in his spiritual work, was the first parish priest at St. Peter's Parish.

But alas, his sojourn in the parish was to be of short duration. After four years of work in the parish, he was transferred in 1927. Father Meyer's special abilities in management persuaded his superiors to appoint him to the post of provincial bursar. Leaving the loyal country parish and the beloved rectory, was a heavy burden to him. But the life of a priest is a life of resignation and submission and quiet obedience.

Father Schneider, O.M.I. took over the administration of the parish. Before his ordination, Father Schneider was a soldier in the World War and as such accumulated a long treasury of experiences. Besides his priestly duties, Father Schneider was also busy as a writer and author, and the reflections on the Sunday gospel published in the *Katholik* is his work.

ST. DONATUS PARISH

The question of the location of a church in a new settlement is an important one. A group of settlers who are far from any railway station or town seem to have no central site for a church which is agreeable to all. The farmers lived far from each other, and it is understandable that each wanted the church built as close as possible to his homestead. In this parish, whenever the question of a church was raised, violently opposing opinions burst upon the discussion; the missionary experienced many angry and disgusting sessions. The deadlock continued and efforts to reach a consensus failed. The consequence was that two churches were built in the area which could support only one. St. Donatus Parish became a tragic example of non-co-operation.

Several groups of settlers arrived in 1912, and in 1913 the number had increased to the point where Father Palm began regular visits. Once a month the faithful gathered at a private home to celebrate Mass. In 1914 when the question of building a church was debated, the parish split into two camps. The southern population whose numbers were somewhat greater than the north, built a church, with the approval of the bishop, on Sec. 10, Twp. 35, Rge. 28. Over twenty families shared the work of construction. The northern portion, not wishing to remain idle, built a prayer house four miles to the north and also laid out a church site. Now there were two churches and two cemeteries but only the south church was served by a priest. In 1916 Father Schwebius, parish priest of Kerrobert, looked after St. Donatus and had Mass on the third Sunday of every month. A fire destroyed the south church in 1917 and the settlers from then on used the schoolhouse for Sunday Mass. Father Meyer took over the care of St. Donatus as well as St. Peter's in 1923. In the summer of 1923, Bishop Prud'homme ruled that the question of location of a church site had to be settled once, for all. The prayer house was purchased by the whole parish in the spring of 1924, moved to the new site and served for services for a whole year.

The little church was, of course, too small for all the faithful. As soon as conditions in the parish improved in 1925, the step was taken to build a larger church. The energetic way in which the people accepted the opportunity to work together was a sign of their co-operation and neighbourliness which they had been neglecting. They put up a building that no one would ever move away. The beautiful church, built from the ground up out of field stone, is the only church in St. Joseph's Colony that is so constructed. On November 25, 1925, Father Brabender opened the church which is a credit to the whole community and of which St. Donatus Parish can be justly proud. The blessing of the church took place in 1926, when Bishop Prud'homme was in the parish for Confirmation.

In the settling of differences and in the building of the stone church, the various talents that the good Father Meyer possessed became remarkably evident. At the time of construction, he was a frequent visitor. He followed the proceedings attentively and saw to it that the construction



The present church

was properly carried out. St. Donatus Parish has a church now that will probably stand for a hundred years in evidence of the generous attitude of the people. Above all, it concretely displayed the change of mind, the peace, and the harmony in work and this is all due to the efforts and good-heartedness of our bishop who showed the way to peace and saw that a church would provide a lasting reconciliation. The united efforts resulted in the attain-

ment of a goal — a church in the parish, a very beautiful church in a very good parish which was patient and persevering in reaching agreement.

The successor to Father Meyer was Father Schneider, O.M.I. His predecessor had laid the groundwork of mission work, and he now hoped to expand the spiritual state of the parishioners by appropriate sermons, addresses and instructions not only at Mass but also through various other means, for example, assemblies, societies, etc. During his short stay in the parish, Father Schneider was able to win the support and trust of the entire parish body. During his tenure, the church, which had been only roughly completed, was finished entirely and the interior decorated. Through the free-will offerings of the parishioners, statues, vestments and holy vessels were provided.

The first settlers of St. Donatus Parish were: Paul Reichert, Stanislaus Reichert, Mathew Dewald, John Dewald, George Rolheiser, Wilhelm Rolheiser, Jacob Rollhauser, Anton Rollhauser, George Schamber, Peter Schamber, John Schamber, Lorenz Kress, Peter Heffner, Nikolaus Heffner, and John Heffner.

ST. MARY'S PARISH OF MACKLIN

Macklin was the name of the late owner of the Free Press, a newspaper in Winnipeg and to honour him, the C.P.R. Company named this station after him. Macklin came into being in 1910. Along with Wilkie and Kerrobert the railway forms a large triangle within St. Joseph's Colony. They are three railway centers from which other branch lines extend. The railway is part of the line connecting Edmonton, Alberta and Winnipeg, Manitoba. South of Edmonton at the town of Wetaskiwin the line branches off to cross the prairies and thus provide a thoroughfare for the large and fertile wheat lands and assure delivery to world markets. The growth of an isolated railway station on the prairie into a town full of activity is a slow process especially when there are no supplementary industries. Macklin is an example of such tranguil development. Father Schultz's comments about Macklin are, "On November 15, 1910, I arrived at Macklin by train. Father Palm, dressed in a fur coat and cap was there to greet me at the station. I was somewhat overwhelmed with the complete change of scenery and the newness of the settlement. We left the station on the north side where the town of Macklin was situated. Suddenly, Father Palm asked me to stop and said, 'Well, what do you think of our town?' 'Where is the town?' I asked. 'You are standing in the middle of it!' came the unexpected answer. Truly, we were standing amongst some isolated, unpainted frame buildings which evidently comprised the 'town'. We did not need to stay long for the whole 'town' could be seen in one instant."

The first Catholic settlers in and near Macklin were Messrs. Bernhard Schaefer, Urban Ryan and Thomas O'Gorman. The first Mass in the parish was celebrated in November, 1910 by Father Palm in the farm home of Mr. Thomas O'Gorman. In town the first Mass was offered in the home of Mr. Bernhard Schaefer. Because of the small number of Catholics, regular Sunday services could not be justified, and the faithful, in fulfillment of their Sunday

obligations, travelled to St. Anthony's at Grosswerder some fifteen miles distant. However, the number of Catholic families increased. Since 1914 regular Mass was celebrated either in the school or in the Imperial Hotel where the owner, Mr. Lee, graciously put a room at our disposal. This arrangement was kept up for two years. The time of waiting for a church had come to an end for that need was about to be fulfilled. Under Father Palm's competent



The first church

leadership, a small church was built in the summer of 1916 and blessed that same fall by Bishop Pascal. The number of families at the time was not more than a dozen.

A zealous and loyal servant in the vineyard of the Lord, Father Palm the good shepherd, laboured diligently during those first years of pioneer life and built a church, but he is credited with yet another

accomplishment. And that is the Sister's hospital which without doubt is the most significant institution of its kind (of municipal hospitals) in the colony. Macklin was the logical location for a hospital because it was at the junction of two railways. But, it would be yet another few years before Father Palm would see his dream a reality. The credit for the actual beginning of the project, however, goes to Father Brabender whose help Father Palm had requested. Father Brabender arrived in Macklin in December 1921 and the negotiations begun by Father Palm were successfully concluded. The municipality voted a grant of \$2,000, and a house-to-house collection in Macklin raised another \$500. Mention must be made of the personal efforts of Mr. Joseph Klotz whose energetic interest was no small contribution to the success of the project.

With the sum of \$2,500, a start was made. The amount was not large but one had to trust in God's care that the good will of the people will continue and increase. It was certainly not possible to think of building a hospital; the

beginning was to be very modest. The Sisters purchased the house of Mr. B. Shaw and prepared it as a home for the ill.

When the hospital opened, it became necessary to appoint a resident priest in Macklin. Father Brabender was named to the post and began his term, as previously mentioned, in 1921.

As a young priest Father Brabender had already worked in St. Joseph's Colony with Father Schweers in St. Charles Parish during the founding years. For several years, with his headquarters in Saskatoon, he visited the many new parishes as they developed along the railway lines. The extraordinary strain of the work soon robbed the young priest of his strength that his superiors found it necessary for the good of his health to send him to the coast in British Columbia where he ministered to Indian Missions.

Father Brabender returned to St. Joseph's Colony with renewed health and vigor and was appointed to the new parish of Macklin and the hospital. Besides, from time to time, he visited various missions where Catholic people had settled.

The progress of the new hospital was evident daily. Thanks to the diligent concern by the Sisters, the sick in the area eagerly sought their care so that the unsuitable house was always filled. The demands on the small number of Sisters were very great indeed. Their heroic efforts earned for them the love and esteem of the whole colony.



St. Elizabeth Hospital

An unexpected upturn in events was in 1925, when Dr. Fritz L. Eid arrived in Macklin from Speyer, Rheinpfalz, Germany. The young doctor had studied at Heidelberg, served at the largest hospital in Germany in Mannheim, and was therefore remarkably well prepared for medical practice. He took a post-graduate course in New York and then wrote his medical examinations for practice in Canada in Montreal passing them with distinction. His reputation became well known and his patients came to Macklin from far and near. To fill the great need, the construction of a new hospital building had to be considered. The corner stone was laid during the summer of 1926 and on May 12, 1927 Bishop Prud'homme was able to consecrate the new building.



The basement church

St. Joseph's Colony can be justly proud of the stately building.

The imposing structure was visible from afar. The hospital was furnished with the latest equipment and was one of the best even when compared to larger hospitals in the cities. Although, not all difficulties have been solved, it is hoped that the co-operation in providing

better medical care and unstinting concern for one's neighbour will always be the aim of the hospital in Macklin.

In the meantime, the growth of the parish advanced to the point where the small church was insufficient for the number of faithful. After long negotiations with the C.P.R. Company, Father Brabender obtained, for a reasonable price, a two-acre property in the immediate vicinity of the public school. The construction of a new church was begun; it was 60 feet long and 36 feet wide. Father Brabender had completed all building plans for the church when he was called to another field of labour. Under the guidance of his successor, Father Goetz, O.M.I. the project was continued. The basement was made of concrete which extended a few feet above ground level; a roof covered

the basement. The room served as a provisional church. The basement churches could be compared to the ancient catacombs. They are half-finished, half underground and waiting for the day when they will rise from the earth and in the brightness of the sun announce their presence. A re-assignment of priests took place at this time. Father Goetz was followed by Father Schoenwasser while Father Brabender went to Scott. His absence from Macklin was a short ten months after which he returned. In 1929 the Catholic Convention (Katholikentag) was held at Macklin for the first time when a large number of priests and crowds of people gathered in the little town. The presence of the bishop of the diocese, Msgr. Prud'home was the highlight of the day. The parish will long remember the glorious day.

KERROBERT

Kerrobert is a creation of the C.P.R. Company. The word comes from the well-known name of Robert Kerr in reverse. The town is situated on the main line to Moose Jaw and also handles trade from a branch line to Wilkie. Like Macklin and Wilkie. Kerrobert was to become an important center of business. The beginnings of the parish in Kerrobert occurred at the same time that the C.P.R. Company built a station. According to official records, the company opened the Macklin-Kerrobert line on February 21, 1911, although freight trains moved along the line before this. It is not likely that any Catholic settlers were located at or near Kerrobert before the railway came, for the early missionaries do not have any knowledge of them. The closest group of Catholic settlers was found in the direction of Ermine some five or six miles from Kerrobert. Further on about nine miles north of Kerrobert on Sec. 14. Twp. 35. Rge. 22 there lived a settler by the name of Math. J. Dietrichs from Barry, Minnesota. He lived in a sod house which was the stopping place of the missionaries who were travelling east or west across St. Joseph's Colony. There too the few scattered Catholics gathered for Mass. The first Mass was celebrated at that farm by Father Schweers in 1906. In the fall of 1909, freight trains started running, and in 1910 Father Guth of St. Michael's in Tramping Lake assumed duties in Kerrobert and surrounding missions. The first Mass in Kerrobert was said in 1910 by Father Guth in a room in the Windsor Hotel, the owner, Thomas Ryan, being an Irish Catholic. Services were held there until the church was built. A site for the church was on a property obtained from the town council and building started in 1911. The outer structure was completed in the same year.



Where the first Mass in Kerrobert was celebrated

Especially concerned about the success of the project was a conscientious blacksmith by the name of Louis Meyer. When the decision to build was reached, he became the main impetus in the whole project, and with the help of some of the settlers he completed the church. It is an example of what one energetic, zealous man can do to achieve a purpose. The old smith has gone to eternity now. Hopefully, the loval and fervent Catholic soul met the good Lord in his merciful judgement. The people in and around Kerrobert were a majority of Protestants. The joy is great when a church is completed in a settlement which is entirely Catholic, but more so when a handful of Catholics, as in Kerrobert, finished their church! The dimension of the church which stands to this day is 60 feet long and 36 feet wide. The first Holy Mass was said by Father Guth in 1911. Father Schwebius followed Father Guth who ministered to the small flock from his parish at Scott. This arrangement

lasted only nine months. The missions along the railway from Kerrobert to Herschel as well as the parish at Kerrobert submitted a request to the church authorities imploring them to name Father Schwebius as resident priest in Kerrobert from where he would serve the outlying missions. Their wish was granted and in July 1914, Father Schwebius became the first resident priest of St. Francis Regis Parish in Kerrobert. At the time of his arrival, there were approximately 30 families. The church was finished in rough only, which means, covered in by a single layer of lumber. Father Schwebius remarked about the church, "In summer it was sufficient, but in winter the ventilation was more than sufficient." As soon as the parish heard the happy news that a priest had actually been appointed, they immediately began the construction of a rectory even before Father Schwebius arrived. Within three or four weeks after his transfer from Scott to Kerrobert. Father Schwebius moved into his new home. Father Schwebius noted the following: "Since no priest resided in Kerrobert before now, the entire array of furnishings were required. Necessary expenses were a horse, buggy, sleigh, harness and stable. At first glance these details would appear not to cost too great a sum, but when one considers that the people themselves were just getting started, that they possessed very few earthly goods, then one has to wonder even today at their generous offerings at that time." With no encouragement from their untiring priest, the parishioners in 1916 began the work of completing and decorating the interior of the church.



Church and rectory at Kerrobert, Sask.

Thanks to the diligence and the fervour of the people, the church turned out to be a fine neat building in which it is easy to pray. Since the St. Regis Parish was small, the parish priest spent much of his time in the management of the many missions he had. Father Schwebius was therefore travelling continually. Besides Kerrobert and Ermine he also had responsibility for the following parishes: Fusilier, Major, in 1915 St. Francis, and in August 1916 the distant St. Donatus Parish south of Macklin. No wonder that the administration of such an immense and widely-spread district wrought havoc with the health of the robust priest. In 1922 his work ended in the parish when Father Kohler, O.M.I. was appointed to take his place.



The first church and settlers at Ermine, Sask.

Just as Father Schwebius seemed to be destined to eternal travel from mission to mission so also was his successor, Father Kohler, forced to unwilling wandering throughout the world during the war years of 1914 to 1916. He was the first and perhaps the only priest of St. Joseph's Colony who had travelled throughout the whole world. His first pastoral post was on the island of Ceylon in the distant Indian Ocean, where with restless zeal he worked in the conversion of heathens. But his blessed apostolic life was

disturbed. The World War which was raging in Europe, had its effects in Cevlon which was ruled by the English. He was born in Alsace and although he was sympathetic with. and a follower of the French cause, he could not stay in Ceylon. He was prepared to deny his German heritage and convictions so that he could remain in Cevlon. But with a heavy heart and in the company of other German missionaries, he was forced to leave his field of labours in his beloved Ceylon. In unspeakable oppression, the prisoners under military escort, were dragged from one place to another until they finally were placed in a prison camp in Australia. Only the energetic mediation of a high church official freed them from their melancholy conditions. The missionaries set out for the United States. From there, Father Kohler received the request of his superiors to go to St. Joseph's Colony, and in 1922 he accepted his obedience in the district.

Father Kohler, however, could never forget his beloved Ceylon which was deeply imprinted in his heart. But, he was too good an Oblate to yearn unreasonably for bygone missionary days. There is hardly a greater contrast than to leave the warm, evergreen, colourful-fairy-tale splendour of the island of Ceylon and to settle in the cold, raw, snowcovered prairies of Canada. It must have been extremely difficult for Father Kohler to accept the change. But the sacrifice was made, and Father Kohler accepted his new field of labour in Kerrobert and missions with zest and even bubbling enthusiasm. The interior and the exterior of the church were given a new coat of paint; church furniture, Mass vestments, and Stations of the Cross were procured. The rectory which had been provided with the bare necessities in furniture, was now renovated and a new heating system installed. Under his jurisdiction, St. Regis Parish expanded very rapidly and the number of families fortunately increased from thirty-five to seventy families. Eventually, however, his tenure in Kerrobert came to an end. In 1929 he happily returned to his work in Ceylon. To the sorrow of the people of the parish, Father Kohler took his leave of Kerrobert.

Since Father Kohler left, various Oblate priests have administered the parish: Father Plischke, Father Leibel and at the beginning of 1930, Father Emil Twardochleb.

ST. FRANCIS PARISH

Situated midway between the towns of Luseland, Tramping Lake and Broadacres (eleven miles distant from each center) is the old, dust covered St. Francis Church. It is off the main highways, on a lonely meadow as if forgotten. It is one of the oldest churches in the colony which still stands in its original state. If we disregard the tiny temporary churches of pioneer times in Pascal (Leipzig) and Selz (Revenue), then St. Francis is also the first church in the colony that was built out of lumber. To be sure, wind and weather through the years have played havoc on the building, and its appearance is a sad picture. The first impression that the passerby gets of the lonely church is one of sadness, one of serious neglect, of a building about to collapse, although the Catholic churches in this country have always had the excellent reputation of always being neat and well kept. The above description should not be taken as a reproach on the faith of the parishioners of St. Francis, definitely not. It is known that for several years now there have been deliberations among the people on the subject whether to build a new church on the same site in the country or whether the small group of parishioners should join Luseland parish and attend church services there. The long-standing indecision is the reason for continual neglect of the building.

The beginnings of St. Francis Parish go back to the year 1906. Mr. Jacob Ulrich was the first settler, and since many groups of Catholic settlers identified themselves with the name of the first settler, this parish too was called the Ulrich Parish. Father Schweers was the first to visit the settlement and celebrated the first Mass in the home of Mr. Jacob Ulrich in 1907. The first visits were made from Selz (Revenue), and later when he took up his residence in Tramping Lake, from there. In December 1908, Father Forner became administrator of the Ulrich Parish until Father Palm relieved him in 1909, and the parish was attached to Grosswerder. An old pioneer settler with the beautiful name of Adam Heiland (Lord) recalls some

memories, "We in the Ulrich Parish had the good fortune to have many priests visit us. I can remember Father Laufer and Father Krist making parish visits here. Also, Father Schwebius arrived one day with Father Schweers." The Ulrich settlement was a thoroughfare and a meeting center of the various missionaries travelling east or west.

During the tenure of Father Palm, the church was completed and dedicated to the honour of St. Francis. Services were held in the church in 1909 by Father Palm. On his first arrival the number of parish members was on the increase. Since Father Palm's residence was situated so far from St. Francis, the church superiors made it a mission and joined it to the parish of St. Michael's at Tramping Lake, where Father Guth assumed the mission work from 1910 on. When Father Schwebius was appointed first resident priest at Kerrobert and its missions in August 1914, St. Francis mission was transferred from Tramping Lake to a mission of Kerrobert.

In 1922, Father Kohler, O.M.I. assumed his duties at St. Regis in Kerrobert and as such also the duty as missionary in St. Francis Parish.

Luseland

On January 7, 1926, Father Kohler received permission from his superiors to use the school building at Luseland to hold Sunday services. Long before this, in 1915, Father Schwebius said Mass for the few faithful that lived in Luseland and its environs, in Ryan's Hotel that was owned by an Irish Catholic. Father Kohler celebrated the first Mass in the school on May 15, 1927.

The parish is dedicated to the protection of the Holy Martyrs.

The first settlers in St. Francis Parish were: Jacob Ulrich, Peter Gerlinsky with three sons, John Germann and three sons, John Riegelhof with three sons-in-law, Frank Schmidt, Adam Heiland. Presently there are sixty-six families.

HOLY ROSARY PARISH

There is a legend told that as the Holy Family in grave distress fled to Egypt, the trail they followed sprouted flowers and roses. The immigration of such a large number of Catholic families into the wilderness of St. Joseph's Colony had transformed the prairie into blossoming fields of grain; in place of the rocks and brush of the Indian life, the beautiful roses and flowers of Christian families bloomed forth. There is nothing more wonderful and beautiful to symbolize the revolution in Western Canada than to honour her who gave us the Saviour of the world, by erecting a temple at the center of the western part of the colony, and title it "Our Lady of the Rosary." As a queen, the church on the hill reigns far and wide, spreading her benediction and peace over the land. The inhabitants at her feet in the Rosary Parish are joyful to have such an imperious guardian saint and such a magnificent church to call their own.



The first church

The beginnings of Rosary Parish, like all the other parishes in St. Joseph's Colony were hard and difficult.

Mr. John Feist, one of the first settlers to take up a homestead on the bare prairie near the church, and who later had a son who became a priest, recalls the following:

"In 1910, I left Djamin (Crimea, Russia) with Peter Fuchs (now in Holdfast), Michael Schroeder (deceased), George Jest with his family, George Koenig and family, George Beckel, Friedrich Feist, Andreas Schroeder, Andrew Krist a total of 63 persons. We were persuaded to emigrate by a report written by Father Laufer and Mr. Lange. Our voyage to Canada was wrought with many difficulties right from the beginning, because every agent tried to get all the money he could from us. Inexperienced travellers that we were, we were cheated many times until we arrived in the promised land, Canada. Our original aim was Tramping Lake, where we hoped to take up homesteads, but we were too late. We decided to look further west and we arrived upon the area which today is Rosary Parish. We were overjoved when we met the settlers Ferdinand Wildermann, Th. W. Wildermann, C. Wildermann, W. Wildermann, P. Boser with his sons Anton, Joseph, John, Peter N. Birn, G. C. A. and B. Schell, J. Waltz, J. Ehrreiser, W. Feist, M. Wagner, and three sons, W. Hobbelsperger, J. Stabler with three sons, and Joseph Hufnagel. As everywhere else, the first beginnings required great courage. We had to be content with the poorest of shelter which afforded a little protection against wind and weather. Our animals have better barns today than we had homes at that time. True, each had a homestead, but with that alone one could not exist. It meant getting to work as quickly as possible. Those who still had some of the money they had brought with them from the old homeland, could purchase the basic necessities - if they could make themselves understood - not knowing English. With some settlers the lard pail was chief cook. By the time I arrived, the C.N.R. (earlier Grand Trunk Pacific Railway) was built about twenty-two miles north of us at the station of Unity. For us that was a great distance. How inconvenient it must have been in earlier days, when the very first settlers had to travel to Battleford ninety miles away to make their purchases. At that time, without a doubt, it took a full week to make the trip with oxen, especially in the summer when the thirsty animals wanted to stop at every puddle for a drink. Life would have been easier if one could have made himself understood easily in English. We often chuckled over the pantomines and gestures in the stores when we tried to buy something.

"Although we came from different regions in Russia and here were living together in one area, all had the one desire of a church. In the meantime services were held by the Oblate priests, Father Forner and Father Palm, usually in the home of Ferdinand Wildermann. After 1911 we were regularly visited by Father Schultz."

Thus the report of Mr. John Feist.

When Father Schultz made his first visit in 1910, there were forty members in the parish. Father Schultz arrived from Grosswerder where he and Father Palm resided. Father Schultz reports that the settlers had an admirable



The present church

spirit. Mass was celebrated regularly, as previously mentioned, in the home of Mr. F. Wildermann where the missionaries also stayed for meals and overnight.

1911 was a memorable year for Holy Rosary Parish. In that year, under the leadership of Father Schultz, the first church was built; the waiting and hoping had ended. The building was completed in August. But alternating periods of joy and sorrow were common in the lives of the people as well as in the history of the parish. The

church was hardly finished when a terrible hailstorm crossed the area and destroyed all the crops. The courageous people had just incurred a debt of \$1,300, in those days a considerable sum. They had hoped to pay at least part of the debt from the pending harvest. The misfortune had destroyed all hope.

At this time Father Schultz accepted his obedience to leave the parish to go to Spring Lake, Alberta. His successor was Father Bieler who for four years laboured in Spring Lake. Of his eleven-year stay at the parish, Father Bieler says, "When I arrived, the construction of Holy Rosary Church had been completed except for furnishings. Thanks



The rectory

to the generosity and the work of the people, the small church was beautifully decorated within a few years. The church measured 40 by 28 feet. There was no sanctuary as such. It was soon necessary to create more room for the people and this was done by building a choir loft. The

choir was provided by Mr. Schmidt and his family. Mr. Schmidt was a former teacher in the Crimea. In him, the priest had a good friend and energetic worker. The sacristan in the first years was John Ehreisen and later was taken over by Wendelin Feist.

"The population of Holy Rosary Parish was comprised of people from the Crimea in South Russia and from the United States. At that time there were approximately seventy families with an amazingly large number of children. No wonder that a new church was required and soon. A proposal was to erect a stately church, and it wasn't enough just to make plans but also to consider the means of payment. In the spring of 1918 the building fund stood at \$5,000, the blueprints were completed, and the construction could begin. Mr. Joseph Schroeffel, an architect from Edmonton who had built several churches in the colony, was chief carpenter. Father Paul Kulawy, O.M.I., the representative of the bishop, blessed the corner stone. The crowd of people from far and near was exceptionally large. The feast was favoured with beautiful weather and the gathering donated over \$1,000 to the building fund. On September 8, on the feast of the birth of Mary, the exterior of the building had been finished. The joy and enthusiasm was immense when the first Mass was celebrated in the sacred building. By the end of the first year \$8,000 had already been paid on the total cost of \$12,000, and already plans were underway for the completion of the interior. During the Lenten Season of 1919 beautiful Stations of the Cross were displayed on the walls. At Easter a communion rail of oak, a masterpiece, was installed. Soon

after the church was embellished with a magnificent pulpit of regalico. In 1920 the artist, B. Imhoff, decorated the church with fifteen large paintings representations of the fifteen msyteries of the rosary. The cost of the work was \$4,000. I am still unable to explain where all the money came from for the building and the furnishings, for when I left the parish in 1923 the remaining debt was only \$1,000."

With reference to the priest, who served the parish so diligently, one of the parish members remarked, "This leadership and solicitude earned our church with its beautiful paintings a certain uniqueness in the colony. The gracious labour of the good Father Bieler will be impressed in our hearts and fondly remembered for a long time."



Ordination Mass of Father Feist

Fathers Jansen, Rosenthal, Palm, Kohler, Jos. Boening, Bieler, Schultz, Feist, Meyer, Ueberberg (Prov. 1926 · 29), Schaechtel, Hermandung, Schulte (author), Groetschel.

Father Bieler's successor was Father Goetz who assumed the function of pastor in 1922. The new priest was still very young. His tenure in the parish was of short duration. He was called to teach in a student seminary in Bellville, Illinois, U.S.A.

But his short stay did not pass unnoticed, for he left one visible effect behind him. Father Bieler had built the church but Father Goetz built the rectory. Holy Rosary thus became one of the most outstanding country parishes in St. Joseph's Colony, thanks to the painstaking efforts of the two missionaries and the continuous generosity of the parishioners. With great satisfaction and joy, the parish today can boast of beautiful buildings they can call their own — a splendid church and a spacious rectory — all achieved within the span of a few years.

Just as Father Goetz was a young soldier in the service of the Lord, so was his successor, Father K. Groetschel (1926) a gray-haired veteran in the service of the Church, thoroughly familiar with the territory and the people of the northwest — learned in the many years of labour in his vocation.

SALVADOR

About half way between Macklin and Kerrobert, there is a village which has the most wonderful name of all districts in the colony. The name of the town is Salvador which signifies saviour.

In the town there is a parish hall which had seen better days. Earlier it was a church in the center of an enthusiastic parish but since has endured extensive renovations. At that time it was located in the country. When the railway was built and the development of a town became evident, the church was deprived of its sacred service, transported to Salvador where it serves as a hall today. It was a sad fate for the old church. If the old wooden structure had a heart and eyes, it would perhaps do the same as the fabled goddesses did, when they were punished by being turned to stone, tears flowed from their stony eyes day and night. It has many memories. The site of the church when it was in the country was on the S.W.1/4 Sec. 5, Twp. 38, Rge. 25, about six miles from Salvador.

Concerning the inception of the Catholic settlement in the year 1906-07, Father Groetschel writes the following: "Among the first settlers were — Caspar and Jacob Zunti, Michael Hopfinger, Peter Leibel and his sons Joseph, George, John, Phillip and Peter, Peter and Joseph Schäfer, Martin Vol, George Herle, Michael Deibert, Raphael Ell and his sons, George Prim, John and Mike McGrath, Jacob Klein, Joseph Hufnagel, Adrian Meier, A. Iwanhoff, J. Pakarno, A. Feldmann, Peter Bartsch, Jacob, Peter and Frank Spring, Jacob Heilman, Anton Usselmann, Ferdinand Schäfer, Joachim Schlosser.



Peter Leibel

Each of the new arrivals had enough land, and good land at that. One could look into the future with hope. But man does not live by bread alone; he must also care for the soul. The soul, too, needs nourishment. It became known that the German settlers at Selz (Revenue) and Tramping Lake were being visited by Oblate priests. From many a heart, a prayer of supplication rose up to the Heavenly Father, 'Dear God, up above, do not forget your children

and grant us a priest in our midst.' Perhaps their prayers were more worthy than ours today, for Father Schweers undertook the long trip to our district as soon as he had the news that a considerable number of Catholic people had settled here. He brought them warm spiritual comfort and help."

As has been mentioned several times previously, the first parishes were not called by their later spiritual patrons, but were named after one of the settlers, at whose home Mass took place. For this reason, this parish was called the



Rectory and St. Henry's Church

Leibel Parish after Mr. Peter Leibel, although at times Mass was celebrated in the home of George Prim.

"One could readily note," Father Groetschel continues, "the unity of mind and heart in the small community. There was nothing more beautiful or peaceful. When there was Mass, no one remained at home. Distances of ten miles and more were travelled by ox teams to attend Holy Mass. When one was fearful of getting cold feet or getting sick by riding in an open sleigh, he would walk instead. Probably all the early settlers in the whole colony were as zealous. Today, with cars, the haste and hurry, it has changed a great deal; this is another time with other sorrows."

In October 1905, Father Forner assumed responsibility in the Leibel Parish along with the parishes of Grosswerder, Ulrich (St. Francis), Rosenheim and Cadogan in Alberta. Only Grosswerder had a small sod church; the rest did not have churches. In this regard there was to be a change soon. The people, in their impetuous zeal began the construction of a church, even though Father Forner advised them to postpone the building of a church at least for a short while longer. The railway was being built and soon to be finished, and the site of the station was decided; they could have built the church there as they had to anyway later. But they wanted a church in the settlement immediately and did not wish to wait any longer. It could have been that the settlers did not assess the changing conditions too accurately, believed the completion of the railway and the town would take several years; they decided consequently to build their church in 1909. The dimensions of the building were thirty feet square. In the same year that the church was built, Father Palm relieved Father Forner in the administration of the district, and from Grosswerder he ministered to the Leibel (St. Henry's) and Ulrich (St. Francis) parishes. The new priest consecrated the building to its exalted position as a church and celebrated the first Mass therein. The patron saint chosen was St. Henry.

Father Palm's activity in the parish was as brief as that of Father Forner. In the autumn of 1910 Father Schultz took over the care of the parish. When he arrived, there were approximately seventy families. The priest usually stayed at the home of Mr. Peter Leibel and he very much appreciated the hospitality of the family.

"In the fall of 1911," relates Father Bieler, "I was sent to St. Joseph's Colony. In the missions entrusted to me, I found three churches, but no living quarters for the priest. Thus, in the winter I stayed with Father Palm in Grosswerder and from there I attended to my missions. The most distant mission was about twenty-five miles from Grosswerder. It was a most difficult trip in winter with the sleigh. As I was returning to Grosswerder from St. Henry's on the Feast of Epiphany, at about four in the afternoon, I was caught in a most fierce snow storm. My horse soon lost its way, and I was wandering aimlessly in the storm as night fell. Luckily I happened upon an old stable where I spent the night in forty below temperatures. Towards morning, the storm went down and by the



The hall and church in Salvador

Grace of God, no serious harm befell me. Very tired and cold through and through, I was able to reach Grosswerder. In the spring of 1912, with the commission of my superiors, the building of a rectory at St. Henry's was begun, even though I didn't have one penny in my pocket. Max Kasperger was the carpenter and the parishioners helped as much as they could. Before long, a stately house, for that time, was finished and furnished with the necessities. On Pentecost, May 12, 1912, the rectory was ready for occupancy. The cost of the new rectory was \$1,700. Thanks to the parish members, the debt was soon paid. From this central point, I

administered three churches to which a fourth was added during the next eleven years. The church was completed and fairly well furnished when I began my duties. It measured thirty feet square with a small addition which served as the sanctuary. The church soon was too small. To relieve the situation, a roomy choir loft was built. The choir was directed by Mr. P. Bartsch, and the members were mostly from the families of Spring and Jung. The first sacristan was Mr. P. Leibel and later Mr. B. Beck took his place. The old church pews were replaced with new ones. A beautiful set of the Stations of the Cross adorned the walls, a harmonium (organ) imported from Germany filled the church with music. A monstrance, new vestments, a new church bell (about 1,500 pounds) were obtained. Soon St. Henry's was a very beloved place. The origin of the parish members was generally in Russia; some of them settled in North Dakota, U.S.A. before they resettled in Canada and the rest came directly from Russia. The faith of the people was truly sincere. They showed great love and lovalty to their spiritual father and created few problems for their pastor."

On January 7, 1923, Father Schultz was appointed pastor of the district and also of St. Henry's Church. During his tenure a long-standing problem was to be solved — a problem which had been evident for some years. What Father Forner had warned against at the time of the first decision to build had now become a reality, that is, the site of the church near a railway station had now become a necessity. "Those residing to the west and northwest of the parish," Father Groetschel writes, "turned to Denzil and built a new church, and later a rectory there. Because of the great distance of St. Henry's Church from any town and the new church in Denzil, St. Henry's in the country could not continue any longer. Therefore, after repeated advice from the church authorities, a decision was finally made to build a new church in Salvador with the name of St. Henry. The split in the parish diminished the number of families in the new parish considerably, so that the consideration of a magnificent church could not be entertained. Again, the beginning was difficult. In 1924, it was resolved to build a basement 90 feet long and 42 feet wide to be used as the church, and later to complete it when

the building fund permitted. The parishioners must be credited for their generosity, as various groups competed in completing the church, equipping and decorating it. The Ladies' Society was especially active in the work.

The old country church was torn down and the salvage used in the building of a large hall (64' x 32') next to the present church. Inspite of the mistakes made, the church and hall were finished without any debt remaining. The



The interior of the church

parish at Salvador would have liked to make better progress, even to secure a resident priest, but it was not possible.

St. Henry's Parish story is an outstanding example of a new age meeting the old. But unity was preserved, through the unshakable faith of the parishioners. Out of the merger of the old and the modern, a new "olive tree" sprung up with fresh leaves and

rich fruit. May this splendid tree afford the peace of faith in the hearts of the parish members and forever be green and thrive to honour Our Holy Mother Church!

SCOTT

When the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway was completed on September 15, 1908, the future of the town of Scott looked very promising indeed. All indications pointed to a bright future. There was no large town in the vicinity which would hinder its growth. The nearest city was Saskatoon, one hundred miles distant. Surrounding the town were the fruitful wheat fields of St. Joseph's Colony and its industrious populace. Scott was destined to become the center of grain elevators, trade, and business. But the

C.P.R. Company destroyed all these dreams! Not far from Scott, the C.P.R. set up the station of Wilkie. There they built a roundhouse and railway yards for the service of engines. From there also, several branch lines extended which drew trade and business to Wilkie. Therefore, the full development of Scott became impossible. The only enterprise that saved Scott was the Experimental Station.

The first missionary in the parish, Father Schweers, arrived in 1910 and remained until 1913. During this time, he built the church and rectory which are still in use today. In 1913 Father Schweers, the first missionary in the area, concluded his work in St. Joseph's Colony and went to Allan. For eight difficult but fruitful years he was dedicated to his work. It should be mentioned that Father Schweers' name was the occasion of a pun. The question was asked why the parish priest's name was Schweers? Most of the children could not answer until a little fellow raised his hand and said, "Because the priest did such heavy work." (The name Schweers is similar to the German word "schwer" which means heavy.)

Father Schwebius was named as successor to Father Schweers. He relates, "I received my new appointment at Scott near the end of October. From there I also administered the following stations: Revenue, Kerrobert (41 miles from Scott), Ermine (53 miles from Scott), as well as Herschel, Druid and Plenty on the C.P.R. line."

One can well imagine the severe difficulties entailed in the mission work if only the great distances are considered. The mission stations were visited regularly — in summer with a buggy, and in winter with a sleigh. It was obvious that Father Schwebius could not carry such a burden for long. The settlers along the C.P.R. Kerrobert to Herschel approached the church authorities with the request that Father Schwebius be appointed pastor with his residence in Kerrobert. The request was granted.

At the same time Father Forner was named to Scott with the missions of Revenue and in 1914, Unity. For the sake of his health, the priest had taken a trip to Europe for purposes of recuperation and had just returned from Germany. When Father Forner arrived at the parish, there was a small debt of \$700, and he gave credit to the people

for their generosity, when he wrote, "The people of Scott were very willing. Some of them were indeed exemplary. There was only a small number of faithful, but within eighteen months, these few not only repaid the debt of \$700 but also raised an amount of \$1,000 for the completion of the church.

"When I completed the church at Revenue, finished the interior of the church and equipped the rectory in Scott, and had both painted, I received the unexpected news from my superiors that I was requested to return to Fish Creek, one of my earliest missions. My health was not at its best, and I had hoped to get some rest at Scott, for considerable progress in development had been made both at Scott and its missions."

Father Forner's departure left a large gap among the missionaries in St. Joseph's Colony. Father Forner was the second pioneer priest who, being transferred from Scott, also left the colony.



Father Forner and Abbot Ott in Scott

The loss of the two priests, Father Schweers and Father Forner, both of whom had made such termendous contributions in the mission fields of the new settlements, was serious at a time when the parishes were developing so rapidly.

The new priest was Father Nelz, whose work in the colony has been mentioned in the chapters on Handel and Carmelheim.

Father Nelz's first impression of the parish of Scott, is noted in his remark, "Scott is the smallest parish that I ever had the honour of serving. At the time of my arrival, the number of families was less than twenty, a small number indeed. But the administration of the missions attached to Scott, namely, Revenue, Unity, Wilkie, filled the time of the missionary completely." Despite the small number of families, his predecessors, Fathers Schweers and Forner not only built and furnished a church and rectory, but also left the parish debt free. Father Nelz was fortunate

to be working among such good people.

With regard to buildings, Scott parish was well taken care of and thus was not a concern of Father Nelz. Instead, he turned his efforts to other things. The village council who administered the local hospital had taken steps to have Catholic nursing Sisters take over the hospital, offering them favourable terms. Father Nelz himself negotiated with the directors of the hospital with the result that a meeting was called to which all interested parties were invited: the town hospital directors, the superior of the nursing Sisters, and representatives of St. Joseph's Colony. After many hours of discussion the offer of the hospital administration was accepted by a majority vote. The ownership of the hospital soon changed hands.

The following Sisters of St. Elizabeth, with the Mother House in Humboldt, arrived in Scott on July 1, 1924: Sister Philomena, the superior, and the Sisters Gertrude, Theodora and Helena. The contract of sale between the hospital authorities and the Sisters was concluded on June 20, with the price of the building being held to a low \$3,000. But it required considerable interior and exterior renovation and improvement, in order to make the institute serve the double purpose of hospital and Sisters' residence. The renovations reached a total cost of \$15,000.

The opening of the hospital on July 1 was a joyous occasion for all the people present. On July 24, Bishop Prud'homme honoured the institute with his presence and consecrated the building with the blessings of the Church. In 1926, Father Nelz was transferred to Prelate. Another priest left St. Joseph's Colony, with Scott his last position — the third in a few years. All three priests sadly departed from their beloved work in the colony where, inspite of the manifold self-denials and difficulties, they found much satisfaction working in a strong and lively Christian community.

In August 1926, Father Brabender arrived as pastor of Scott. He did not remain long, however; in June 1927 he was recalled to Macklin.

On June 27, 1927, Father Joseph Boening, O.M.I. arrived to administer the parish of Scott. He was a young priest whose home was near Handel. Father Jos. Boening was one of those few who had a late call to serve in the vine-

yard of the Lord. As a young man with his parents and brothers and sisters, he suffered the hard fate of poor immigrants to Western Canada. He took up a homestead in the neighbourhood of his father's farm near Handel. Life there was not very rosy. Want and poverty reigned in his hut. In previous years he had already begun his studies with diligence and with the boundless trust in God he achieved his ultimate goal. On June 19, 1926, Father Boening was ordained to the priesthood in Edmonton, Alberta; on the following day he offered his first Mass in his home parish of Handel where the whole community joyously took part. His first appointments were in the southern part of the province, in the district of Prelate before he was stationed at the parish of Scott. The population of the parish had happily increased considerably. At his installation as parish priest there were thirty-one families: today there are fortyeight. Attached to Scott were the missions of Wilkie and Unity; Revenue had its own resident priest by now.

WILKIE

The youngest of all Catholic parishes in the colony is Wilkie. During the last few years, many Catholic farmers moved out of the Prelate area to settle farther north. Wilkie received its share of settlers from this group. Farmland was cheap which was one of the reasons for re-settlement. The parish which numbered only a few families for several years now suddenly increased in population.



The church in Wilkie, Sask.

Particularly favourable to the progress of the town is its location. It is a railway center and all signs indicate great future development. Several dates in the progress of railway construction are worthy of mention: the C.P.R. line from Biggar-Wilkie-Unity was completed on October 28, 1908; to Macklin on April 18, 1910; Wilkie-

Cut Knife on December 19, 1911; Wilkie-Leipzig-Handel-Kelfield on November 5, 1912; Wilkie-Revenue-Tramping Lake-Broadacres-Kerrobert on July 4, 1913. In the present year, 1930, the line Wilkie-Battleford is under construction.

Father Schweers visited the few Catholics soon after a beginning of the town was made. The first Holy Mass was offered in 1909 in the home of a French-Canadian by the name of Genereux who at that time was at the head of the R.C.M.P. Father Schweers' successors were Fathers Schwebius (1913 - 14), Forner (1914 - 20), Nelz (1920 - 27), Joseph Boening (1927 - 30). All the priests administered Wilkie in the same way as the first priest did, but later the courthouse was used for Mass.

As mentioned previously, a sudden influx of Catholic farmers occurred in 1925 and 1926. The number of families in 1925 was barely a dozen; in 1927 it had risen to thirty-seven, and today there are seventy-one. Father Boening, who took up his duties in the parish in 1927, purchased a plot of land and in November of the same year began digging the basement for a church. The construction started in November 1928 and by Christmas the framework was up. The dimensions are 60 feet long and 40 feet wide. The sanctuary is 20 by 18 feet. The first Mass was celebrated by Father Joseph Boening on Christmas Day of 1928.

ST. ALOYSIUS COLONY

Post Office: Allan, Sask.

Before the conclusion of this story, a few words should be devoted to another colony, which, although not as large nor as beautiful as St. Joseph's, is an accomplishment which will be forever a sign of the zeal and sacrifice of the German missionaries, and a testimony to their energy and perseverance. It seems necessary to note that the colony named St. Aloysius Colony had the same founding priests as did St. Joseph's Colony and the settlement of both occurred during the same period of time.

The German Oblate missionaries of Th. Krist, W. Brabender, J. Laufer and Th. Schweers were instrumental in

the organization of the colony as well as St. Joseph's and their names form a vital part of the history of each. The first beginnings date back to 1904 when Father Th. Krist met with the first settlers to discuss the possibility of forming a parish some forty miles east of Saskatoon. A visit by Carleton bolstered the confidence and courage of the first pioneers. By 1906, the colony had progressed so well that Father W. Brabender initiated regular services and two churches were erected to ensure the stability of the colony. The rapid development of the colony continued when Father Th. Schweers was transferred from St. Joseph's Colony to assume duties at Allan. His predecessor, Father Brabender went to British Columbia for reasons of health.

The Grand Trunk, now the Canadian National Railway, was constructed through the colony to Saskatoon. Under the guidance of Father Schweers who had already spent seventeen years as a missionary, the colony developed spiritually and orderly and its importance grew as well. In rapid succession three churches, nine schools, two parish halls, a convent of the Ursuline Sisters, and a rectory became a reality. Several societies were founded which had as their aim the strengthening of the spiritual life,



Father Schweers (inset) St. Aloysius Church Allan, Sask., 1922 A.D.

economic progress, and the preservation and growth of the German language and press. The town of Allan was at the center of the colony and was an example for the other parishes of which there were four; it had a large beautiful church and the Ursuline convent. The cost of building the church was \$46,000 and, except for a small amount, is completely paid for.

It is particularly worthy of mention that in the nine schools in the colony, seven German Catholic teachers taught religion in the German language and the children to read and write in German. In this regard the Ursuline Sisters as well as the lay teachers Paulina Wald, J. Nieman, and F. Kupser earned a great respect for their competence in the teaching of religion and the German language.

A word, too, about the generosity and persistence of the first pioneers must be written here, although space does not permit a long description; at least their names can be recorded as a small acknowledgement of their service to the Church and the faith.

Joseph Heisler, Frank Boechler, Jos. Kraft, Rudolf Boehm, M. and S. Loran, O. Wingeter, Martin Leier, Jos. Volk, Joseph Zacher, N. Hauk, Ignatz German, Karl Silbernagel, Andrew Kraft, B. Bitz, Andrew Senger, Kaspar Selzler, Jos. Senger, M. Deibert, A. Marbach, W. Weniger, Joh. Klotz, H. Scherr, Jos. Brossart, A. Schatz, L. Schnur, Jacob Senger, John Brossart, Jos. Hegel, Jacob and Jos. Kraft, T. Hulm, Anton Pfilger, Paul Wald, Joh. Wenninger, John Schan, John Boechler.

Many of these pioneers are already in eternity, and have been rewarded for their earthly labours. It is hoped that the future generations will continue to build upon the foundations laid by their forefathers.

THE EXPERIENCES OF AN IMMIGRANT

Our home was in the town of Tauxie in the Crimean Peninsula. I completed my military service on December 16, 1909. My poor parents welcomed me home with great joy. Inspite of the poverty, I still was happy to be home. After a few holidays, I had to leave again. Sadly I left to travel to Charkoff, where I took the position of foreman at a country estate owned by a fellow soldier I knew. They treated me more like a friend rather than a servant and sought always to make me happy. But I wasn't really satisfied there. I longed for my own home and property. The thought of going to Canada intrigued me. I went to a doctor who informed me that I couldn't make the trip since I was sicker than I thought. A German doctor in Simpferopol gave me some medicine and by August I felt much better.

I was working for my brother-in-law who lived near the Black Sea when I received a letter from America. I was strongly considering making the trip but the shortage of money was a real obstacle. I went to my brother-in-law and asked him for 200 rubles. I told him my parents were too poor, as he well knew. I have been working for seventeen years and all the money I earned went to the support of my parents. God willing, and I remain in good health, I will return the money to you again, I told him. If some misfortune should come to me, then the good Lord will have to return it to you through His blessings. My brother-in-law was astonished with my proposal. But he answered sympathetically, "I will give you the money and hope for the best."

My wife and I, on October 21, 1910, at six o'clock in the morning took leave of our brothers, sisters, friends and comrades. My tearful parents gave us their blessing. We got on the train and were off into a strange new world. After three days of travel, we arrived at the port of Libau on the Baltic Sea. There we had to wait for seven days. I purchased the tickets at an office and asked some questions for directions, etc. I discovered that it was necessary for each person travelling to Canada to have \$50 for expenses. That was our ruin; I didn't even have two rubles in my pocket. I asked if it were possible to be exempt from this requirement. The officer in charge offered me no hope at all. His advice was useless.

I requested then that they refund the money I paid for the tickets; we had no choice but to remain at home. As I turned around, I faced two men who had overheard my conversation. They asked me if I was German, what my name was, where my home was, my destination, and the reason for my discussion with the official. I asked their names; they were John Ell and Frank Selinger. From then on we spoke in our mother tongue. I briefly related my problem to them. They stated immediately that I would not have to remain behind, that they would loan me the necessary money. I thought they were jesting. They understood the astounded look on my face and said, "You can depend on us, young man." Tears came to my eyes as I thanked them. They introduced us to their families and in my heart I prayed, "Dear God, how is it that in time of

my greatest need, you are always there to help me." Perhaps it was the silent prayer of my dear mother. I sought out a priest and asked for a Mass for my intentions. The next day, we boarded the ship. The whole group was like one large family.

After four days of swaying and rocking, we arrived at Hull, England. There we took the train to Liverpool. Then we boarded another ship and in nine days, we landed at Halifax, Canada. There the generous Mr. John Ell gave me \$200. I have since repaid all the money. We didn't see



Adam Glatt's farm, Revenue, Saskatchewan

each other again till Winnipeg. After our joyful meeting, we left together headed for Allan, Saskatchewan. My companions stopped there, but I continued the trip on to Macklin, where I arrived on December 3, 1910. We got off the train and stood surveying the situation. Not a person spoke to us. I said to my wife, "Here we are forsaken by God and all men." A woman and her son passed us. I asked her in German where I could get in contact with some German people. She shook her head, however, with, "I do not understand you." But her son did take us to a lumber office where we met a German-speaking man. I asked him how far it was to my brother-in-law's place. He answered, "Twelve miles." I replied, "But how am I to get there?" I cannot hire anyone to drive me there for I have only fifty cents." The man said, "You can stay at my house overnight." Then we hurried to the station to pick up our baggage. To our surprise we met John Reinbold. It was quickly decided

to travel that same evening in the company of our friend to the farm of Joseph Kelsch. I will remember that trip forever. It was very cold and we lost our way. After much wandering, we finally arrived at my in-laws at eleven at night. We were dead tired but joyful just the same that we had arrived safely in our new country.

The next day arrangements were made for our stay until we were settled. We returned to town, where, thank goodness, and with the help of friends. I was able to find work with the C.P.R. I worked there during the week and on Saturdays I would walk back to my relatives. On Sunday afternoon I left ready to return to work. I kept this up until December 24. Then I was out of work until February 5, when I found work on a farm not far from Denzil at Max Drab's place. On March 1, my wife found employment at the same place as a maid. Four weeks later, I walked to Macklin to apply for a homestead at the land office. I walked ten miles in a southerly direction when night fell. The next morning, I continued for another twelve miles in the same direction where I chose a piece of land. In Macklin I had it registered in my name. I returned to the farm at Denzil late at night. My shoes had taken a serious beating from the long walk but at least the weather was nice.

On the first of May, my wife and I moved into Denzil where I found work with the railway. I built a hut, 12 by 14 feet. That was our home. Gradually, we secured our basic needs and everything went well. I was known far and wide, perhaps, because my name was John. I purchased three oxen for \$325 and a pony for \$5. I believe the pony



Thadeus Usselmann's farm, Revenue, Saskatchewan

was as old as I was. I was able to get a wagon for \$80 and a second one I borrowed from a good neighbour. Then I was ready to leave — a distance of twenty-seven miles from Denzil to the homestead. The trip took a whole two days. There was no shortage of water, even if it was only swamp water; for cooking we strained it through a cloth. During the first night the pony ran away. I never did see it again. After two days, I returned to Denzil to take back the wagon I had borrowed. In town I bought the necessary machinery



Threshing on a farm at Leipzig, Saskatchewan

for making hay — everything on credit. Then with the slow oxen I made my way back home again. I was able to get considerable help from my brother-in-law since he took up a homestead near me. We proceeded then to put up provisions of hay for the winter. Two oxen were hitched to the mower and one to the rake. The mosquitoes were so bad on some days that we had to wear nets over our heads. Sometimes one had to tie a smudge pot to the pole to protect the oxen from the mosquitoes.

Inspite of all the difficulties we amassed thirty-five tons of hay. Then we built a barn out of sods. Our own meals consisted of oatmeal and tea for breakfast and tea and oatmeal for supper. Now and then we had meat when we were able to kill a rabbit or prairie chicken. One morning a cow wandered into our yard. No one claimed ownership, so we milked her and then had milk with our bread. We were hoping that we could keep her. We found comfort in the proverb, "A cow eliminates all poverty." But the next day an Englishman came to get her. With a sign language

I was able to tell him that we had milked her. He informed us that whenever his cows came to us, we should go right ahead and milk them and use the milk. I thanked him for that. The good cow visited us often after this.

On July 19, our first child was born — a girl.

In order to complete the sod house, it was necessary to get some lumber. That meant a trip of three days fraught with difficulties. The barn was covered and surrounded with hay. On August 27, 1911 we loaded our bedding on the wagon and left at daybreak to attend Sunday Mass. When we arrived at Grosswerder we had Father Palm baptize our child. From there we went visiting relatives. We were also looking for some work with the harvest. On October 1, we rented a house in Macklin. I seldom was out of work and every day, my wife could also earn some money. In March 1912, we packed our few belongings, hitched up the oxen and returned to our homestead. We started life anew. I planted the oats by hand. The soil was well cultivated with the harrows. In 1913 I sowed thirtyfive acres of new breaking and twenty-three acres of stubble land with oats. After that I went working for other people with my plow and oxen. Five miles away I was breaking prairie and I worked at that for two weeks. My sleeping and eating quarters were a hole in the ground. Mice and gophers (somewhat like a hampster) kept me company. I could hardly protect my bread from them. When I returned to my home, I continued with the same kind of work there. In the fall I bought a binder. There was a threshing machine in the neighbourhood. The barley yielded thirty-five bushels to the acre, oats thirty bushels to the



Plowing on a farm at Leipzig

acre. When my own harvest was finished, I went with my oxen to work with the harvest of other farmers.

In 1914, fifty acres were seeded with wheat. I used the summer to break some more land and to make some hay. In the fall of 1914 I traded my oxen for horses and from then on things went faster. I bought two cows and as many pigs. Over the years the number of animals slowly increased. The total yield of wheat from 1914 to 1929 was 37,250 bushels; oats from 1912-29, 12,000 bushels; barley 1913-29, 1,200 bushels; flax 1913-15, 200 bushels. Animals raised were: 1914-28, 22 horses; 1912-29, 102 calves; 1914-29, 260 pigs.

J. D., Compeer, Alberta

IN TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS UNDER GOD'S PROTECTION

The following account was reported to his superior by Father Forner, O.M.I.:

On Sunday, January 3, 1909 at 3:00 p.m., I left from a place four miles north of Cadogan, a town in Alberta, to return to the main mission of St. Michael at Tramping Lake. The settler at whose home I had offered Mass, implored me with, "Reverend Father, it is terribly cold. It isn't advisable to venture out in weather like this."

"Oh, I think I'll get there eventually," I answered. "I'll travel in short stages, six miles in the morning and six miles in the afternoon. That way I can keep my directions straight."

Anyway, I left. It was frightfully cold. It was reported in the paper that the thermometer registered 45°F below zero that day and between 30 and 40 below zero the next day. The road to my destination was good, the snow was smooth, and the weather was clear. I used my switch a bit to urge my horse to a quicker pace. Suddenly the horse stopped, and to my astonishment it stretched its head to the sky and sniffed the air. I didn't understand this immediately and brought down my switch, but alas, it broke like a glass rod. I had a piece left in my hand and with it I hoped to get the animal moving again, but even this piece broke

in half. Then it dawned on me how unbearably cold it really was. A lay brother by the name of Guillet who had lived in the far north, had related to me that north of Reindeer Lake, the missionaries had to bury the axe in the hay pile because if it was left in the cold for a long time, the handle would break as soon as it was used. It was bitterly cold for several days. After seven days of travel in the sleigh, I arrived safely at Tramping Lake on January 10, 1909. Since I had promised the people in the western part of the colony, at Grosswerder, to celebrate Mass on the Sunday next, I started my return trip already on Wednesday, the 13th of January at 2:00 p.m. The thermometer showed -35° F. On the way to Mr. Rigelhof, I froze my feet. So I wouldn't lose my way in the darkness, it had been agreed previously that he was to hang a burning lantern high up on the gable as soon as it got dark. Thanks to the guiding light I did not stray; I spent the night at his place. I could not sleep a wink all night because of the burning pains of the chilblains on my feet; happily I greeted the morning of January 14.

After Mass I took to the road in a northwesterly direction and at noon had a light meal at the Zunti brothers, two young Catholic men from Switzerland. My next aim was the farm of Mr. Peter Leibel, about six miles distant where I usually offered Holy Mass. Two miles from the house of



Father Forner on his travels

Mr. Leibel, I came to the top of a hill, but could not locate the building. I noticed, however, another building nearby. A house is a house, I thought and started off in that direction. But woe to me! There was a house and also a barn alright, but no smoke issued from the chim-

ney. The snow was blown six feet high around the buildings and no paths led into the lodging; the house had been forsaken by its inhabitants. I followed a depression in the snow which seemed to be a trail probably leading from the yard to a neighbour. But I ran into a serious obstacle—a sort of hole that was ten feet deep and fifteen feet wide. My horse sank deep into the snow and made great

leaps in order to get out of the hole. I jumped into the snow and assisted the animal as much as I could by supporting the sleigh. My cassock was filled with snow. By the time I got on to solid ground again, it was completely dark and it didn't take me long to make the decision not to travel another step further. In the empty house there is shelter at least; travelling into the unknown was out of the question. Therefore, I turned around. In the belief that the horse would follow the trail back to the house, I dropped the reins, but the horse veered in a different direction without me being aware of it. That sealed my fate, It was two days before I saw a human habitation again.

I wandered back and forth across the prairie. I had never seen such millions of stars shine so brightly and clearly. I had the whole sky of stars before me: the Great Bear and the North Star were twinkling. But they were useless to me on the prairie for I couldn't read directions from the stars. At eight o'clock in the evening I was back at the hole again, and common sense told me not to stray too far for I may still be able to find a shelter. I zig-zagged from east to west, paused occasionally and shouted as loud as I physically could and rang the harness bells. Perhaps a dog will bark and people will notice my predicament. I was sorry that I didn't have a lantern with me. I fed my horse the last hav that I carried under the seat. After long wandering back and forth I got stuck in a frozen swamp covered in high grass where the loose snow banks were four to five feet deep. The poor animal could not drag the sleigh any further. I let the horse rest, got out of the sleigh, waded to the top of a rise. As I reached the top, I saw to my left a dark object. What could it be? I was frightened. I hurried back to the sleigh. Without delay, I drove in the same direction as I had walked. Blessed St. Joseph, I called, if only I had even a stable or a hay stack. When I arrived at the top of the hill, I again saw the strange object. What was it? Well, I quickly headed for it getting closer and closer until I saw that it was truly a splendid stack of hay. Excellent! Hardly had I called on the help of St. Joseph and as if by magic, there was a large hay stack of at least a hundred tons. The horse forcefully crashed upon the hay pile, for it had only a small ration of feed since noon; in its rush it upset the sleigh. I therefore unhitched and the

animal fed heartily. For myself, I prepared a small place in which I put the seat of the sleigh. It was difficult work because the hay was so long and so tightly packed. I then took a few moments of rest. Suddenly, the horse became uneasy, walked back and forth and wanted to lie down. "O-ho," I thought. "Now that too; the animal is sick. There is one thing you cannot do. You cannot lie down; that would be the end of you."

A thick layer of frost had entirely covered the poor animal. With considerable effort, I cleaned off the frost with the use of hay; the horse was shaking all over, and it took three-quarters of an hour of continuous work until I was finished. I was completely exhausted. The horse was steaming hot and the night bitterly cold. The animal too was exhausted.

After the hard work it was a matter of waiting, and I pondered over many things, as a person does when he is all alone and forsaken. But the respite was of short duration. There was a stirring in the air; the horse left the hav now and approached me in such a strange manner. I was actually startled by its odd behaviour. I made up my mind that the blustery wind is not going to affect me, not in this night. There was no doubt that something was brewing in the weather; a terrible storm was in the offing. The instincts of the horse noted this better and therefore sought the protection of its master. Since the wind was blowing from the southeast, we immediately took shelter at the northwest end of the hay stack. We were hardly there when the raging, howling storm let loose as I've never seen it before. But I remained calm not letting fear overcome me. I thought of my two guardian angels: my own personal angel, and the guardian angel of the parish in whose care I entrusted my fate; they will certainly protect me. These thoughts gave me exceeding comfort. Other thoughts too gave me consolation. Our blessed founder, Bishop Mazenod, and Father Albini could not permit my fateful demise because it was by obedience to the Church that I was in the colony and on this particular trip.

The hay stack was facing the wind at its wide end and thus we had only a small area for use as a shelter. The hind legs of the horse had to be in the wind. I could not remain long in these circumstances. To avoid the onset of

melancholy, I began to sing in a loud voice, "Wandering is a miller's delight. Wandering is" It made for some variety in my situation and concentrated my thoughts on other things. Time seemed to pass a little more quickly. Finally, my watch showed 7:00 a.m. I packed the sleigh full of hay, led the horse to the front, hitched up and hurried off. But where to? Naturally, we'll travel with the storm into the northwest. I had great hopes that my travels would perhaps come upon a house or a fence. It was ten o'clock when I came to a large lowland, a lake bottom, and I tried to turn the horse in a southwesterly direction, but the raging storm was too fierce and bitterly cold — at least -30° or -40° degrees. So I continued with the storm, got out of the sleigh and tramped through the deep snow. With one hand I held onto the reins and with the other I steadied my satchel on the sleigh. This was very tiresome since we had to climb a thirty-foot bank. At the top I found a house without doors or windows, and a barn without a roof. I couldn't possibly stay here. So, off we were again into the storm over hill and dale. How often I had to get out and trudge through the snow to lessen the load for the exhausted animal as it climbed the hills, I cannot say. About



Father Forner, O.M.I.

4:00 p.m. I guessed that I was at the northwest corner of Grosswerder Parish, I saw many a mirage during the endless drive. For example, a stone of three or four feet in diameter or a mound from a badger hole would seem as high as a house in the distance: also a small shrub would seem like fully grown trees. At one time I was sure that I was seeing the form of a house but didn't turn in its direction for I thought it to be just another mirage. Today I know that I had passed the Stang settlement (Michael or Joseph), for I am told that during that night the dogs were barking continuously. As evening approached, I began making preparations to spend a second night in the storm on the open prairie. Unwillingly, I again called on St. Joseph and the Holy Family who fled to Egypt, "St. Joseph, I commend my safety to your protection, as a child in the arms of its mother. You will save me. Lead my horse." Fortunately, the wind changed direction in just the right time for if I had continued in a northerly direction I would have ended up in a large pot hole where I certainly would have perished. The depression was at least a quarter mile in circumference with twenty- to thirty-foot-high steep banks which would be difficult to climb even in daylight. I travelled for another two hours when the horse suddenly stopped; it could go no further.

I was filled with horror and alarm. Tears began to roll down my face. I was overcome with despair. It lasted about half a minute. I sat there motionless, as if struck, without thought, without feeling, but with trust in God my merciful judge. The full understanding of destitution rushed upon me and the tears streamed down my cheeks. In an instant my whole life flashed before me from the smallest to the greatest error; it was like images passing before my eyes. Never have I done such a thorough soul searching as at that sad moment. Curiously, the thought came to me that this trip was very imprudent rather than a good deed. After another thirty seconds, I roused myself again and confidence returned to me. I jumped out of the sleigh, threw my fur blanket over the horse and called out, "Do not lose courage, old boy, or else you'll be lost. When I die, I want to die according to God's will; I didn't come to this land to amass a lot of earthly goods." Then I started to sing a hymn of thanksgiving and everything seemed better again.

I became aware that I was very hungry. I remembered that I had some wine and a few hosts with me. I removed my mitts, opened my satchel and searched for my needs. My hands had become cold and stiff in the storm. To get the blood circulating again, I took a handful of snow and tried to rub my hands. But, alas, I didn't have two hands but two 'forks' on the end of my arms completely without any feeling. Later, the skin peeled five or six times. I couldn't touch anything warm for a whole year.

Anyway, I continued to work at the satchel. The wine was frozen in a solid mass except for a few drops. Of the hosts I consumed perhaps one or two. The thought occurred to me then that a little nourishment will only awaken a greater appetite, and, therefore, I closed the satchel. "With God's help," I thought, "I'll survive." I got into the sleigh again and due to my weakness and extreme fatigue, I fell asleep. I was awakened suddenly, as if someone had struck my shoulder with a heavy blow; I jumped out of the sleigh and said to myself, "No more foolish mistakes." From then on I tried to keep moving - from the sleigh to the horse, and back, made genuflections, etc. Then I became curious as to what time it might be. I struck a match behind the sleigh; it was 10:00 p.m., and I thought it would be about two in the morning. Very disillusioned, I resolved henceforth not to look at the time again until I am rescued so that the passing of time will not seem so long. Again, I began to sing with new gusto, "God has helped me thus far, and He will continue to help." Time passed a bit more quickly. I didn't feel any tendency to fall asleep or to lament. It was unbelievable how quickly the time from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 or 8:00 a.m. passed as the storm finally abated. There was one more big gust and the wind died down, followed by complete calm and stillness. The sudden end of the storm had such an effect on me that I began sobbing with joy and sang with all my energy the Columbus Song. "Thanks be to God, the Saviour in time of need." Finally, the long-awaited morning dawned. The sky turned brighter, the east reddened and light came upon us. My horse was still alive, and still on its feet; no reason now for melancholy and sadness. I noticed that I was in the midst of some hills where the animal was probably trying to find some shelter from the raging storm. As I reached the top I saw a house in the distance. Downhill, uphill I went until I reached the dwelling; it was boarded up. I hurried to the next rise in the land and to the west I could see three buildings five or six miles distant. The animal had become very feeble so that it could move only step by step through the deep snow taking three slow hours to cover the distance. Finally, I was rescued! The whole experience had a strange effect on my nerves and physical well-being. My left arm was plagued with the pain of gout

so intense that I sometimes had to shriek because of agony.

When I reached the point where Eye Hill Creek enters Macklin Lake, I saw for the first time in two days, two human beings. What a joy! They were Mr. William Scott and his son who were watering their cattle in their farm yard.

"Hello," I called already from a distance. "You are the

first human beings I've seen in two days!"

"What!" they said.

And I told them of my experiences. They couldn't believe it. They were moved to pity, were very helpful, did all they could to help me. I stayed two days at the home of these people who were Protestant. May the good Lord richly bless their hospitality.

After a few days, I finally arrived at the home of Peter Leibel. There was an indescribable scene. Father, mother, sons and daughters all wept and sobbed when they laid eyes upon me.

"My dear people," I said, being touched by the scene,

"Don't weep; it is all past now."

"But, dear Father," they answered, "we are weeping for joy; we were sure that you were dead and frozen on the prairie." I thought to myself, "You wonderful Christians, who have such a sincere concern for the welfare and safety of the priest. God bless you!" Next day, after Mass we sang a solemn Te Deum, and if ever a chorus of thanksgiving rose to the heavens in St. Joseph's Colony, it was on that morning.

The event was so consoling that it left an impression with me to this day.

This episode serves to strengthen the conviction that Divine Providence is always watching over the welfare of His missionaries.

EPILOGUE

In closing this book of reminiscence, Pictures and Pages on the occasion of the twenty-fifth Jubilee of St. Joseph's Colony, it is fitting to include an extract from a letter from His Eminence Cardinal Rossum, the Prefect of Propaganda in Rome, written by the Prince of the Church on December 30, 1925 to Mr. Louis Frederick Rouquette, author of an excellent book on the Oblates in Northern Canada:

"What interests me, the more I learn about the missions, the more I am convinced that the Oblates were real missionaries in the true sense of the word, that they are not of those who long for instant success, not of those who turn back in the face of hindrances, difficulties and suffering, not of those who think their toil has been all for nothing, when they themselves cannot reap the benefits of the harvest. It is very clear that the Oblate priests are men of God; they labour for their Lord and the secret of their success is that they themselves live a holy life for the greater honour of God. When they have achieved certain basic goals, they are satisfied. They know also that their labours are not in vain for everything done for the love of Christ will bear fruit."

Der Geist über den Einöden (The Spirit of the Wilderness), by Louis Frederick Rouquette, translated into German by Stephanie Nemann-Herder Press, Freiburg, Breisgau, Germany.

Statistics of St. Joseph's Colonoy March, 1930

Catholic families: 1,326 of which 1,186 are German. Oblate Priests, 11; Parishes, 17; Missions, 5; Churches, 17; Church basements, 2; Chapels, 2; Catholic school children, 2,026; Catholic teachers, 50; one convent at Leipzig; one Catholic hospital at Macklin; Sisters in Macklin, Leipzig, Revenue and Tramping Lake.

Die Canada Colonization Association

gibt sich die Ehre, am Tage der Feier des 25jährigen Bestehens der St. Josephs-Kolonie den Gründern, Leitern und Pionieren dieser Kolonie ihre Hochschäung und ihren Glückwunsch zum Ausdruck zu bringen.

Fünf und zwanzig Jahre sind eine kurze Spanne Zeit im Leben der Bölfer; die ersten fünf und zwanzig Jahre im Leben einer Kolonie sind aber von größter Bedeutung: sie meinen Erfolg oder Wistlingen.

Freundliches Jusammenarbeiten der Einwanderungs-Abteilung des Bolfsvereins Deutsch Canadischer Katholiken und der Canada Colonisation Association haben der Kolonie in den letzten Jahren manchen erwünschten Zuwachs gebracht.

Nuch die Colonisation Finance Corporation wird ihre Tätigkeit bald über ganz Saskatchewan ausdehnen. Sie wird ein neuer Faktor werden in der Jusanmenarbeit zur Gesundung, Förderung und Hebung der Landwirtschaft im Westen Canadas.

Möge dann die blühende St. Fosephs-Kolonie einen weiteren Aufsichwung nehmen!

Canada Colonization Association Colonization Finance Corporation

460 Main Street

Winnipeg, Man.

Die Einwanderungsabteilung des

Volksvereins Deutsch= Canadischer Katholiken

bat von Anfang ihres Bestehens in der St. Zesephs-Kolonie ein vorzügliches Feld ihrer Tätigkeit gesunden. Unter verständnisvoller Mit arbeit der Ansiedler konnten von 1923 dis heute eine große Anzahl Einwanderer, Familien und Einzelleute, in der Kolonie untergebracht werden. Nach schweren Jahren in der alten Heimat sanden sie dier unter Landsleuten und Glaubensgenossen die Wöglichkeit, sich eine neue Heimat und eine aussichtsreiche Zukunft zu sichern.

Die Einwanderungs Abteilung des Bolfsvereins Tentich Canadische Katholiken spricht zum 25 jährigen Zubiläum ihre berzlichen (Rückwünsche aus. Sie gibt dabei der Hoffmung Ausdruck, daß das bisherige freund liche Zusammenarbeiten zwischen der St. Zosephs Rolonie und der Einwanderungs Abteilung des Bolfsvereins weiterhin fortbestehe. Die Dien site der Einwanderungsabteilung in der Fürsorge sür die Einwanderer und Ansiedler stehen sederzeit kostenlos zur Berfügung.

Der St. Josephs-Kolonic auch fernerhin ein kräftiges Blüben und (Bedeiben!

Die Einwanderungs-Albteilung des Volksvereins Deutsch-Canadischer Katholiken

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Was bedeutet dies?

Die C.M.B.A. — die Natholische Gegenseitige Unterftütungs-Geselsichaft — ist eine Gesellschaft, die aus katholischen Männern und Frauen besteht. Ihr geistlicher Leiter ist der Hochwürdigste Herr E. A. LeBlauc, der Bischof von St. John, der Seiner Gnaden, unserem verstorbenen Erzbischof D. E. Mathien als Oberster Geistlicher Veirat (Grand Spiristual Adviser) folgte. Die Ziele der Gesellschaft sind, ihre Mitglieder zum gegenseitigen Schnk, zur Brüderlichkeit und zu aufrichtigem, praktischen Katholizismus zusammenzuschließen.

Der gegenseitige Schut der Mitglieder ist durch Versicherung und Krankenunterfüßung gewährleister. Rährend des zweinndfünfzigiährigen Bestehens
der Gesellschaft sind an die Witwen und Angehörigen der verstorbenen Mitglieder
zesn Millionen Dollars ansbezahlt worden, und mehrere hundertkausend wurden
als Unterstüßung an erkrankte Mitglieder gezahlt. Matholische Männer und Frauen im Alter von 16 bis 50 Jahren, die eine ärztliche Untersuchung bestehen
können, werden zum Anschluß an die Versicherung gesucht. Die Krankenwersicherung kann jeder nach Vesteben eingehen. Witglieder, die nicht in unserer Lebensversicherung sind, können zugelassen werden, jedoch nur, wenn sie die Altersgrenze überschritten haben oder wenn sie die ärztliche Untersuchung nicht besiehen können. Alle diesenigen, die Mitglieder werden wollen, müssen einen guten moralischen Auf und die Anerkennung ihres Pfarrgeistlichen bestehen

Die Brüderlickeit und katholische Gesinnung kommen, wenn in einer Gemeinde ein Zweigverein gegründet ist, durch viele Taten und Anregungen der Nächstenliebe, durch tätige und führende Teilnahme an der Gemeindearbeit und durch Borträge und Diskussionen über die Mitglieder interessierenden Fragen, vor allem über die Glaubenslehre, zum Ausdruck.

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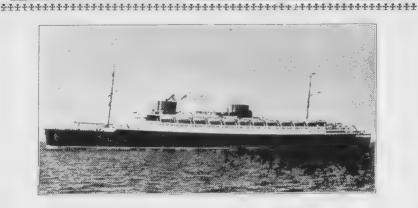
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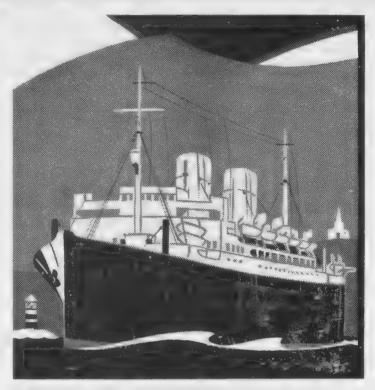
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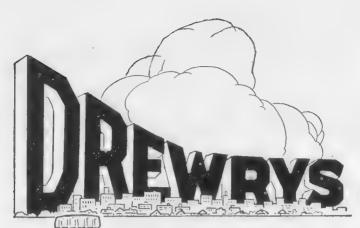
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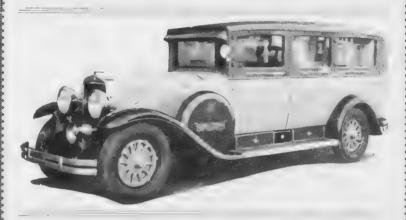
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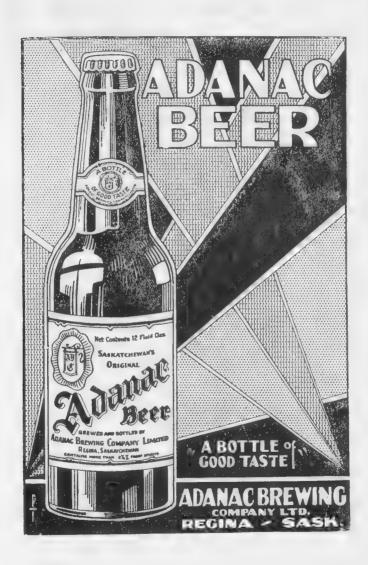
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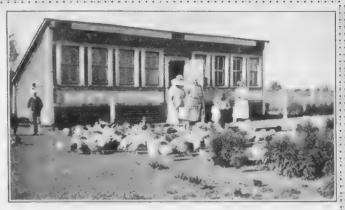
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